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THE LATER REALISM

A STUDY OF CHARACTERIZATION IN THE BRITISH NOVEL

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By

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TO

RUTH ROSANTHA MYERS

PREFACE

This is primarily an essay toward definition, an attempt to designate clearly and analyze concisely important aspects of present-day fiction. That I have limited myself to characterization in the British realistic novel is for convenience in isolating noteworthy examples of what I wished to define. That I have not taken into account publications later than 1923 or thereabouts is to preserve a certain continuity in my work yet to avoid repetition and unwieldiness. In short, I have not sought to extend my inquiry beyond the point where that for which I was searching had stoutly asserted itself. Nor has very recent English realism, as far as I am aware, embodied essentials that have not been commented upon here. This is true even with reference to such striking modifications and complicated interactions of the more extreme tendencies with which I am concerned as appear, for instance, in the later work of Mrs. Virginia Woolf.

Of course I shall not be understood to imply that the larger movement to which I have called attention in this study does not merit genuinely critical evaluation, if the time be ripe for it, in the whole bulk of British and American novels published since the terminal date of my investigation. This is self-evident; I mention it chiefly to indicate that I am aware of much unattempted here, much, to be frank, that I could scarcely have outlined the completion of this book.

Concerning whatever herein has value, I would share the credit with those who in any way emboldened me to

undertake this task and heartened me toward its completion. For friendly informal comment and clarifying critical judgment upon ideas later used in this volume, I am indebted to my former instructors Dean L. B. R. Briggs, Professor Bliss Perry, and Professor Percival Hunt, who is now my colleague at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Edith Rickert, Professor John M. Manly, and Professor Tom Peete Cross have my gratitude for kindly and searching criticism of preliminary plans and of manuscript; as has also Professor Robert Morss Lovett, who with unflagging patience met my need for counsel and encouragement. I thank also my colleague Professor George Carver for assistance with proofreading and kindred problems; and I am glad to express my obligation to publishers and authors who have permitted me to use for purposes of illustration excerpts from copyrighted material.

W. L. M.

November 26, 1926

CONTENTS

I. Preliminaries 1
1. General Purpose 1
2. Late-Victorian Characterization 6

II. Influences Shaping the Later Realism 22
1. Literary Forces 22
2. Developments in Science and Philosophy . . . 28
3. The Newer Psychology 34

III. General Aspects of Recent Characterization . 58
1. The Incongruous 58
2. The Extra-Realistic 78

IV. The More Pictorial Elements in Recent Characterization 94
1. Introductory: The Elements Both Imageal and Non-Imageal 94
2. Details of Background in Characterization . . . 102
3. Details of Appearance and Action 106
4. Summary 122

V. The Less Imageal Elements 123
1. Dialogue 123
2. The Subjective Element 137
3. The Subjective as a Mode of Narrative 153
4. Summary 160

VI. Conclusion 161

Bibliography 163

Index 169

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARIES

I. GENERAL PURPOSE

The novels of George Eliot may be named as the first that are adequately representative of native British realism fully matured but not yet modified by French naturalism and later European influences. In opposition to romance, in preference for domestic realism, in the exaltation of the humble and the commonplace, George Eliot is completely typical of her day; and in technique she has unusual significance. Her earlier practice is a workmanlike summation of the better developments in fictional method up to 1850. She does not, to be sure, have the mastery of closely blended and somewhat generalized narrative shown by Thackeray; nor does she have the full power of detailed stagecraft that Dickens exhibits in the better of his scenes. George Eliot does, however, employ competently each of the two methods of narrative favored by her great contemporaries; and in her later novels she relies also upon a psychological analysis which, in elaboration and precision, was scarcely possible before the mid-nineteenth century, and which she first perfected. Whatever the weaknesses of George Eliot's fictional bow it had a sufficiency of strings, one of them essentially new and destined to be much plucked by her successors. This distinction makes George Eliot more serviceable than either Thackeray or Dickens as a landmark in the later British novel.

Although George Eliot's influence is obvious even among writers of the present day, the departures from her theory and practice of fiction are sufficiently outstanding to merit careful inspection. One part of this task is here undertaken—the study of recent developments in the characterization of the British realistic novel.

To delimit the chosen field, certain question-begging terms must be disposed of. *Realism* is to be understood as a general tendency or purpose—the purpose of conveying to the reader, whatever else may be accomplished, a strong sense of things actual in experience and within the range of the average life. Beauty, ugliness, even strangeness, may tinge the actuality and the normality; yet if these two qualities retain their essential nature and are distinctly evident in a novel, that book has been, for the occasion of this study, called realistic. Such a definition leaves room for endless and not uninteresting quibbles, but it has been found sufficiently precise to guide in the selection of novels, the characters of which have been well worth consideration. To be classed here as realistic, a novel must be addressed with all seriousness and in some actuality to the broad average of humanity; and it must imply strongly that the facts narrated may be paralleled, though perhaps on a smaller scale and with less intensity, in the lives of the reader and his associates. To be rejected here as romantic a novel must above all lack this large implication of normality. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights,* to cite an example outside the chronological range of the present study, can be called nothing but romantic; but Rebecca

West's *The Judge,* despite its melodrama, is clearly realistic.

Characterization is, like realism, a very general term. Its definition always presents the difficulty pointed out by Henry James when he observed that no great precision attaches to the distinction between the narrative and the persons of the narrative, between the individual and the stuff and pattern of his experience.[1] Yet when due allowance has been made for this truth, especially in its application to the writer who has mastered his craft, there remains the dire critical and didactic necessity of recognizing such oft-discussed entities as character, plot, and setting, and of analyzing them into the more distinct of their components.

For the present study characterization is interpreted with some liberality. In general the larger emotional and intellectual content of the novel is considered part and parcel of what may be called the "significance" of the persons concerned, that is, of the traits, themes, and motifs embodied in these individuals. This study recognizes also that almost indefinable thing called "personality." In fiction, personality consists of essentially the same qualities as belong to it in actual life. In last analysis it is an aura of the dimly perceived that accompanies those things palpable to sense which are the evidence of reality. It includes, for example, whatever overtone of artistry may sound in the repetition of a name such as

[1] See "The Art of Fiction" in *Partial Portraits.* The description of all volumes cited appears in the bibliographical list appended to this study.

that of Mr. Galsworthy's Irene Forsyte[2] or Hardy's Tess.[3] Personality, in short, constitutes individuality, identity itself.

The larger developments in realistic characterization since George Eliot may be designated in terms of the foregoing definitions. As always in realism, the moving force seems to be a desire for the final and utter truth about life. In the search for this truth realists have enlarged their view of normality and have gained power in the use of actuality. These developments are manifest in three ways. First, the more advanced realistic characterization shows a disregard of artistic, traditional, or conventional consistency or unity and permits often an effect that may properly be called *incongruity*. Second, there has been an infusion of something poetic, metaphysical, mystical, which has heretofore in prose fiction been the property of romance and which may for convenience be called the *extra-realistic*. Third, close attention to personality and its externals has produced "a sharper specification of the signs of life."[4]

The purpose of this study is to specify in terms of the three developments just named the broad conception of normality and the intensity and amplitude of actuality that mark present-day realistic characterization. This purpose appears best served by procedure from the general to the particular. Hence late-Victorian realism will first be examined briefly as to the clear cen-

[2] In *The Forsyte Saga.*

[3] In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*

[4] Henry James, *Notes on Novelists,* p. 321.

tering and traditionally realistic quality of its characterization. Then influences will be considered making for change, and their issue in the incongruous and the extra-realistic will be noted. Finally, against this general background, the details of highly actual recent portrayal will be examined and defined.

The novels from which evidence is drawn are, for convenience, considered in three groups, which are referred to by Roman numerals. The major works of George Eliot and Meredith constitute Group I; its unity lies in the persistent didactic or ameliorative purpose and in the dependence upon the subjective in characterization. Hardy affords a connecting link between this group and Group II. This latter group consists of the more important works of Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Galsworthy—a classification based upon the fact that all three follow essentially the late-Victorian tradition in character-portrayal with a modification due to the presence of social criticism, which is intensified in the case of Mr. Wells and Mr. Bennett by an infusion of French naturalism. Group III consists chiefly of novels by Miss Dorothy Richardson, Mr. James Joyce, Mr. D. H. Lawrence, and Miss May Sinclair. The elements of likeness here are the newer psychology and a radical departure from the narrative method of the late-Victorians. Henry James serves in a way to link Group III to Group I. The basis of this grouping is not fundamentally chronological, for the three styles of characterization are all flourishing at the present day; but if dates are needed, that of 1883, marking the appearance of George Moore's intensely naturalistic *A Modern Lov-*

er, may be suggested in connection with the earlier of Group II, and that of 1913, marking the appearance of Mr. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers,* may be associated with pioneering in Group III.

Group I, then, has been depended upon to body forth those conventional standards of characterization from which Groups II and III depart. Group III has afforded the clearest evidence of deviation toward the incongruous and the extra-realistic. Groups II and III both exhibit the heightened actuality in details of portrayal.

The reader is besought not to mistake this study for a systematic and chronological treatment of relationships and influences. These factors are taken into account when they are needed to make developments understandable; but a careful searching out of obscure and perhaps unsuspected lines of transmission is not the task in hand. Nor is this study primarily the complete analysis of any writer's method or accomplishment in character-portrayal, or of the portrayals in any given list of novels. The object of this investigation is to define the larger developments in recent realistic characterization, drawing evidence as needed from only the more representative novels, and terminating where the tendencies under observation are easily discernible.

2. LATE-VICTORIAN CHARACTERIZATION

The true nature of recent realistic characterization cannot be comprehended until something is known of the influences that produce it. Yet a working knowledge of the newer realism in its more obvious aspects, the in-

congruous and the extra-realistic, may be secured by contrasting typical characters in Group I and Group III. One of the values in such a contrast will be that of affording a clear text for the present section, the purpose of which is to comment upon late-Victorian characterization with special reference to the two qualities just mentioned.

In the matter of incongruity Clara Middleton[5] and Elvina Houghton[6] make significant contrast; in the matter of the extra-realistic Daniel Deronda[7] and Gerald Crich[8] serve effectively.

Recalling, then, those episodes of *The Egoist,* Clara's girlish betrothal to the impressive Sir Willoughby, her bewildered discovery of his egoism, her desperate attempts to get decently out of a situation difficult for all concerned, one will be confident that her every act is motivated by traditionally rational standards. The formula for Clara is that of distinct and congruous unity; her past is understandable; her future, given certain conditions, is fairly to be predicted. Elvina, on the other hand, is almost two women, either of whom may appear at any moment. She alternates between matter-of-fact conventionality and stark sexual primitivity. Today she is residing quietly in her native community; tomorrow she is far away, sexually subject to a total stranger, quite lost to her old world. Given conditions however certain, no one can foresee Elvina's response. She represents what is here called incongruity.

[5] In *The Egoist.* [6] In *The Lost Girl, vide infra,* pp. 65–67.

[7] In *Daniel Deronda.*

[8] In *Women in Love, vide infra,* p. 89.

Striking differences appear likewise in the contrast of Deronda and Crich; but the differences are not so much in quality as in degree, for there is about the personality of each something difficult to define, a condition almost negligible in Deronda perhaps but in Crich paramount. George Eliot, at any rate, believed that Deronda possessed a presence of unusual power; also she saw in him the ideal, the archetype of the higher traditional Jewry. In all, she willed that Deronda walk in light a bit more glamorous than that of the prosaic everyday; she came sufficiently near her desire to make her intention clear—at least if one be looking for it. About Crich there can be no uncertainty. He is not so much a solidly real individual as he is the embodiment of a strange mood interpretative of life. At every appearance he is redolent of Mr. Lawrence's evaluation of modern commercialism, masculinity, and the Nordic race. Crich's artistic value, such as it is, lies in his defiance of explicit definition, in his fuller possession of the vague yet potent quality faintly discernible in Deronda, call it mystic, metaphysical, extra-realistic, what you will.

A groping toward the true comprehension of such as Elvina and Crich is the thing attempted in these pages, and the quest now really begins.

If in the attempt to know the true nature of Elvina's incongruity one resort to chronological study, he might say that in prose fiction the historical stages leading up to her are, first, simplicity of traits in characterization; second, complexity; third, incongruity. In general, late-Victorian realism is just entering upon the stage of complexity. This view, however, implies emphasis upon the

term realism and disregards those characterizations that are patently super-normal, exceptional, in a word, romantic. Thus there is set aside that rather dual-natured creation of the early nineteenth century, the Byronic hero-villain; for the same reason no consideration can be given to the matter-of-fact romance of Charles Reade and the whole school of sensation novelists.[9] English realism, then, is in late-Victorian times just beginning to proclaim the complexity of the normal individual.

The influences producing this condition in late-Victorian realism may now be summarized and the condition itself instanced. But in passing, it is worthy of note that here in part is the reason for not going beyond the late-Victorian period to find a starting-point in this study. Here also is an additional reason for selecting George Eliot and Meredith as late-Victorian realists most worthy of inspection. In the first place, as has been mentioned of George Eliot, they are innovators with the subjective method. In the second place, they go farther in the matter of complexity than any of their contemporaries who produce realism.

When all is said, however, the significant thing is that George Eliot and Meredith do not go even farther with complexity in characterization. They both possess the unsparing analytical temper that must find truth, and they both have fine skill in psychology. This endowment might well lead to the discovery and proclamation of incongruity as a quality of the normal consciousness. That George Eliot and Meredith give no evidence

[9] For comment upon the essentially romantic nature of this school see W. C. Phillips, *The Sensation Novelists*.

of wishing to make such a proclamation is probably not due to obtuseness but to the fact that neither the science nor the literature of their day leads up to a publication of the anomalies in the normal. The whole trend of science in their time is to make anything approaching incongruity in human traits seem bizarre and abnormal; the whole disposition of literature is to find deviations from the accepted norm either fanciful or amusing.

The potency of mid-century science in establishing a clear sense of type or norm representative of any species is obvious. During the middle decades of the century, when the theory of natural selection was being established, attention was turned toward the so-called "survival value of characteristics." Features were selected for study that had become common to a species, and the attempt was made to demonstrate that these characteristics had been perpetuated largely because they adapted the animal to environment. Thus emphasis in all branches of biology was placed upon the species, upon general conformity of the individual to the group.

Under this conception, namely that the ultimate fact is the group rather than the individual, there took shape the popular notion of heredity as a force perpetuating the type or norm. The late-Victorian man of science says:

> No one can escape the tyranny of his organization; no one can elude the destiny that is innate in him, and which unconsciously and irresistibly shapes his ends, even when he feels that he is determining them with consummate foresight and skill.[10]

[10] Henry Maudsley, *Body and Mind* (1st ed., 1870), p. 68.

An excellent phrasing of the general conception of heredity as a man of letters interpreted it after it had assumed final shape chances to occur in the writings of Oscar Wilde.

> It [heredity] has shown us that we are never less free than when we try to act. It has hemmed us round with the nets of the hunter, and written upon the wall the prophecy of our doom. We may not watch for it, for it is within us. We may not see it save in the mirror that mirrors the soul. It is the Nemesis without her mask. It is the last of the Fates and the most terrible. It is the only one of the gods whose real name we know.[11]

If to this concept is added the sense of a twin power, that of environment, which grimly tests out the survival value of each individual trait, there appear the fundamentals of a purely mechanistic determinism in which is short shrift for variations from the type. To be sure, this philosophy was mollified in its application to human affairs by the positivism of Comte with its assertion of the great Hegelian principle of progress; and neither George Eliot nor Meredith was prostrate before the idols of determinism. The only point in this connection is that in regard for type or norm in character-portrayal they did go with their age.

As to the fictional tradition under which they worked, little need be said with reference to complexity in characterization, and nothing can be said of incongruity except that it was not a factor in serious realism. Thackeray represents perhaps the farthest advance of the older realistic school of the day toward complexity. The most that he did was to admit a certain feminine

[11] "The Critic as Artist" in *Intentions*, p. 179.

perversity in his depiction of admirable women and, in the class of the reprehensible, to grant Beatrix Esmond with all her worldliness flashes of self-depreciation and truth-seeing. There is undeniably a sense of amplitude and completeness about his characters, but these effects do not come from the complexity of his portrayals.

In fact the tacit assumption of Victorian fictionists is that the actualities of life are not to go into the book; occasionally there may have been some complaint such as Thackeray's in the well-known Preface to *Pendennis,* but the rule held. Crudity, redundancy, ambiguity, or any like aspects of life in the world were not to be set forth in print, for the world of life and the world of literature were not at all the same. Neither George Eliot nor Meredith made any very revolutionary attempts against the tradition, despite their possession of a technique which might have led directly to some degree of independence.

What they did produce was at most a fair complexity unified and clearly centered. In *Diana of the Crossways,* for example, Meredith most fully amplified his preferred feminine type, the young woman of mind and charm. He produced a figure about which he could in his later years concur with those critics who see in Diana the most complete and vital of his characterizations. Concerning the degree of complexity in Diana there may be less unanimity of opinion, since it is easy to mistake the subtlety and downright quiddity of Meredith's style for intricacy of material. In fact, first reading of the novel gives an effect of greater complexity in Diana than appears upon analysis. The evidence upon

her range of intellect consists of a few aphorisms, a few passages of brilliant conversation, the titles of her books, an occasional glimpse into her mind while she is struggling with her problems, the report of her friendship with an astute prime minister, and a chorus of diarists, excerpts from whose journals constitute the most telling part of the earlier pages. Otherwise, in a secondary sequence as it were, there are Diana's intense devotion to her confidante Emmy Dunstane, Diana's prostration at the loss of her younger statesman Dacier, her final capitulation to the faithful Tom Redworth. With these two bodies of material Meredith has produced an impression of some complexity.

Diana is, in fact, a very serviceable illustration of character made to formula, an instance of the centering, almost the simplification of portrayal in Group I. In the first pages of the novel Meredith designates the formula: it is brilliancy of mind, caustic, swift, precise, best stimulated by the complacent, amorous male of the Victorian upper class—essentially such brilliancy as Meredith himself displayed. How naturally this graces the nineteen-year-old Diana of the earlier chapters is not of interest here except as indication that the dominant trait was to Meredith of importance almost equal to that of the person owning it. Throughout the book there is no forgetting Diana's mind. To it her dark, resplendent beauty and her indubitable femininity are subordinate. These latter are chiefly important to point a corollary theme, namely, that woman, no matter how intellectually superior, could not live in the Victorian world without conceding much to love and sex. Diana's

attempt to disregard love and sex is merely an assertion of her preponderant intellect. The failure of masculinity and of society in general to aid her in her experiment is due to her beauty and her femininity.

There are thus two distinct strains in Diana's personality. Neither is presented in great detail; and what is more important, the minor strain is not developed as at all antithetic to the major.

Perhaps, when all has been said about Diana, the truer measure of complexity in Meredith's characterization may seem to be the figure of Richmond Roy in *The Adventures of Harry Richmond,* that "subtle mixture of frankness and treachery, disinterestedness and egoism, nobleness and vulgarity, candor and craft."[12] But Richmond Roy is by no means so representative of Meredith's depiction of normal humanity as Diana is. Roy is one of the largest elements of romance in his son's largely romantic adventures. He is obviously a literary whimsy, the embodiment of Meredith's style. Diana is after all a safer indication of the distance toward complexity that Meredith was willing to travel in unquestioned realism.

George Eliot, with a greater faith in actualities and individualization, went farther, multiplying the traits of her main figures more fully than Meredith did and presenting more abundant direct evidence upon phases of the central traits. Yet she kept each individual within a circle sharply drawn.

Maggie Tulliver[13] is George Eliot's most compli-

[12] Constantin Photiades, *George Meredith,* p. 53.

[13] In *The Mill on the Floss.*

cated character, an authentic, serious piece of realism. She has candor, impulsiveness, sympathy, sensitivity, intelligence, and in its appropriate place, a bit of the ardent, questing confusedness of adolescence. The evidence upon all these traits is manifold and does not need recapitulation. Here is, then, an abundant array of qualities, true complexity, but not what must be called incongruity. In truth the character is as far from incongruity as is Diana, and it is centered and circumscribed in much the same manner of literary formalization. Within the first five chapters of the novel there is clear indication even in the childish Maggie that the character is to be formed of two elements, need for enduring affection (not to be confused with sexual love), and a certain impersonal alertness and large competency of mind. These two strands are carefully manipulated. They unite, for example, firmly in Maggie's eleventh-hour rejection of Steven Guest. That is, her own impartial distinction between right and wrong and her affection for her cousin Lucy Deane, to whom Steven is engaged, triumph over romantic love.

A character offering at first glance what might seem greater complexity is that of Tito Melema,[14] who passes from innocence to the utmost guile. Yet Tito is no more complicated than Maggie, even less so. The formula in his case is selfish love of ease, distaste for difficulty in any form. By the fourth appearance of Tito, George Eliot has announced this and has indicated that the stages of deterioration are to be marked by deeds many of which are purely impulsive, all of which are signifi-

[14] In *Romola.*

cant for their psychological results. "The contaminating effect of deeds often lies less in the commission than in the consequent adjustment of our desires. . . . ." From this view of Tito there is no deviation; there is in fact little attempt to amplify the character by subsidiary traits as with Maggie Tulliver. Tito first half-consciously thinks treachery, then acts it impulsively, then executes it deliberately. In short, the character, despite its change of aspect during the course of the story, is really far more simple than such an individual is in actual life.

The exact degree of complexity in Group I is clear from the foregoing illustrations, but perhaps a better summary of the matter will appear through a brief mention of complexity as shown in the later realism. Clare Hartill[15] will serve. Here is a blend of all the traditional inconsistencies of femininity, the maternal and a few kindred traits omitted. She is by turns charming, affectionate, suave, waspish, brutal, hysterical. She inwardly admires and applauds excellence with "an epicurean appreciation"; she both admires and despises her own "intellectualized sensuality" and "carnal personality";[16] she is both hypocritical and frank with herself. In brief she knows her own literary formula.

> Her own nature was, in essence, theatrical; her frigid and fastidious reserve warring with her irrepressible love of the scene for its own sake. She was aware of the trait and humiliated by its presence in her character. Usually she would curb her inclination with a severity that was in itself histrionic: at times she indulged it with voluptuous recklessness.[17]

[15] In Clemence Dane's *The Regiment of Women.* [16] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 176. Copyright 1917 by the Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

This is almost incongruity. Certainly it is complexity of a strikingly actual sort not dreamed of by George Eliot and Meredith as a subject for realism; and certainly it indicates the relative simplicity of Diana, Maggie, Tito, even of the romantic Richmond Roy.

The kind of actuality exhibited in Clare Hartill, George Eliot and Meredith did not desire. After all they were not intent upon the utter truth about individuals or even about types; in the long run they valued actuality, both objective and subjective, as a means of discussing with art and clarity topics of practical social value. As psychologists they might have come to the depiction of Clare Hartills, but as late-Victorians and as novelists with a social purpose they could not.

For precisely the same reasons they could not produce characterizations notable for qualities of extra-realism.

This is not to imply that they were blind to the spiritual or the supersensual. Their common interest in speculative philosophy, particularly the system of highly literary metaphysics that Meredith embodied in his poetry, comes instantly to mind; nor is one likely to forget George Eliot's powers of religious insight. But the mystical and the metaphysical neither she nor Meredith deemed especially suitable for fiction. The novel, as they practiced it, was an agent of immediate amelioration; hence it must deal with phases of daily human conduct. They preferred to discuss those human qualities that shape life directly, such qualities as self-renunciation and egoism.

From the Reverend Amos[18] and Milly[19] to Gwendolen Harleth[20] and Daniel Deronda,[21] the array of Eliot's characters is rarely tinged with anything mystic or metaphysical. Deronda has been cited as a mild instance. Dinah Morris,[22] Savonarola,[23] and Ezrah[24] are more decided exceptions to the general rule. They are all religious devotees and they all possess unusual power of personality, thereby dominating those with whom they come in contact. These things are most pronounced in Ezrah; in all the others, except Dinah, they are analyzed well nigh away; and Dinah loses much of her Christlike super-humanness when she becomes Mrs. Adam Bede. Ezrah, however, from first to last is to be felt as akin to the Old Testament seers and leaders, and so owning qualities that escape any precise formula. One character, then, in the several score created by George Eliot is the measure of her inclination to use the extra-realistic.

Study of Meredith's novels reveals an even slighter inclination. The earlier books lead up to and confirm his devotion to comedy in his special sense of the term; and comedy, impartial, corrective, above all intellectual, has no place for vaguenesses of any sort. His metaphysics he confines to his poetry; the nearest approach to it in his fiction is an occasional hint at the spiritual relationship of man and nature, references that do not greatly affect characterization. It is significant that

[18] In *Scenes of Clerical Life.*

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] In *Daniel Deronda.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] In *Adam Bede.*

[23] In *Romola.*

[24] In *Daniel Deronda.*

Meredith considered *The Egoist* the most perfect of his novels. No book was ever written that concerned itself less with the vaguer and more mystic aspects of human nature.

From such matters Group I is really remote; they are not the concern of realistic fiction typical of "the age of intellection."

This is by no means to deny the existence of the thing in Victorian literature; it does appear in romantic fiction, and, of course, in poetry. Dickens' Madame Defarge[25] displays one phase of it; Bulwer's *The Haunters and the Haunted* shows another; the romances of William Black exhibit yet another; Stevenson's novels show it at the point of entering into realism.

In fact to assert that any considerable element of the extra-realistic or that any considerable degree of incongruity do enter into realism is virtually to assert that realism has received an infusion of romance. More accurately, perhaps, one might say that in recent literature the merely external distinction between romance and realism tends to grow less clear. By the late nineteenth century, romance and realism were, in the school of the sensation novelists, contending for possession of the extraordinary; now realism seems inclined to appropriate not merely a large area of the exceptional or extraordinary but to reach out into the improbable, or what has hitherto been considered the improbable, leaving to romance only the impossible. The pretext for this conquest will be evident in the subsequent chapter, one function of which is to show that the distinction be-

[25] In *The Tale of Two Cities.*

tween normal and abnormal has become less precise than it was in Victorian times. By the newer psychology we are all potentially abnormal; the normal are those who do not manifest all their innate qualities.

The sharpness of the line that the nineteenth-century scientist sought to draw between the normal and the abnormal is indicated in such studies as the one of Henry Maudsley's previously mentioned, the thesis of which is that confirmed criminals are mental defectives in whom the disorders of mind are accompanied by disorders of the brain and nervous system. There is a further extension of the same idea in such works as *The Criminal*[26] by Havelock Ellis, which deals with not merely the mental but the physical characteristics of criminals and seeks hopefully for reliable generalizations as to facial appearance and bodily condition.

Coming to maturity in an age that worked toward this clear-minded definition, George Eliot can stretch her sense of normality no farther than to indicate that under unusual provocation a quite normal girl may remain passive and allow her tyrranical husband to drown;[27] and Meredith can do no more than show that a man of notable mentality can, if sufficiently goaded, make himself a spectacle to the high gods.[28] Perhaps it is more illuminating to say that George Eliot and Meredith show no serious interest at all in abnormality, using it outright only as a form of eccentricity affording comic relief, or, as in the case of Sir Willoughby, depicting a

[26] First ed., 1890.

[27] Gwendolen Harleth in *Daniel Deronda.*

[28] Alvan in *The Tragic Comedians.*

modified and hypothetical abnormality for corrective social purposes. They know quite clearly what they wish to do and what will be most of service for their ends. They know quite clearly that there is such a thing as romance, the chief function of which is to transmit the thrill residing in the impossible, the improbable, and the extraordinary. Romance they both refuse to write.

The novelists of Group I, then, working with a distinct conception of the normal and a strong consciousness of its importance, do show a certain complexity in characterization, but reveal little that is romantic, poetical, metaphysical, extra-realistic.

CHAPTER II

INFLUENCES SHAPING THE LATER REALISM

Since 1880, among the more distinct influences affecting the novel may be named the following: first, a group of literary and artistic forces—naturalism, impressionism, symbolism, expressionism, and dadaism; second, developments in biological science and related philosophy; third, developments in psychology.

All these condition present-day realism and must be mentioned constantly in any attempt to analyze it, either with reference to the widened conception of normality or the keener, more profuse actuality that has appeared since late-Victorian times. Any effort, however, to show precisely how the various influences issue as the incongruous or the extra-realistic would involve a repetition too prolonged to justify itself in this study. Whatever makes for incongruity is to be understood as making also for extra-realism; but the more striking relationships, such as those between developments in psychology and incongruity, will be treated in suitable detail.

I. LITERARY FORCES

Naturalism as outlined by its great exponent Zola in his *Le Roman Expérimental*[1] has been the most pervasive and persistent of the literary influences named here.

[1] First published as essays, 1875–79. *Vide supra,* p. 5, referring to *A Modern Lover,* 1883, the first thoroughgoing instance of French naturalism in English fiction.

Naturalism disdains literary graces and purports to tell the truth about life as it has been revealed by science. In telling that truth naturalism professes to follow exactly the method of science, that is, collection of detailed evidence, induction from this evidence, and impersonal setting-forth of the conclusions. Unlike native British realism, naturalism opposes the use of any typification or idealization which will not serve to demonstrate that all men are by nature akin to the beasts, particularly in matters of sex. Moreover naturalism asserts, as Eliot and Meredith never did, the supreme importance of heredity and environment; and it finds its best material in the most degraded classes and in the revolting aspects of life. It uses abundant physiological detail, and thereby has aided in the development of sharper identification of character. Its relation to incongruity and extra-realism is that it turned the attention of English realists from conventional portrayals and that it merged into symbolism in the attempt to wrest from the bare, sordid triviality of its detail the maximum of significance.

In literature, the term impressionism has twofold significance. In the first place it implies that the object depicted is invested with an atmosphere not always attending it. Presumably this atmosphere is due in part to the temporary mood or fixed disposition of the observer. In transmitting to another the image of the object, the observer is transmitting also his mood or disposition. In the second place, impressionism seems to imply a heightening of the representative rather than the imitative quality of the details used to depict the object; that is, the object is suggested by salient features

and not reproduced by minute elaboration.[2] This is usually accomplished not merely by the omission of the unessential but by the intensification of the essential. In general, impressionism is more easily discernible in the short story than in the novel. It has tended to make writers more precise and thoroughgoing in the projection of states of mind. In the matter of external portrayal it has unquestionably made for careful selection and stylistic heightening of descriptive material. Finally, in certain moods, it joins forces with symbolism to produce the extra-realistic.

The term symbolism strictly used implies that the symbol is not an instance of the thing symbolized; hence only the initiate can understand the symbol. In literary use symbolism often merges into representation, or more accurately perhaps, emerges from it when the specific details chosen for representation are made to convey ever wider and deeper meaning. Symbolism in recent French literature was, according to Mr. Arthur Symons, an attempt to break away from the realists, the Goncourts, Zola, Leconte de Lisle, who "aimed above all things at being precise, at saying . . . . so completely that nothing remained over which it might be the business of the reader to divine. . . . ."[3] In fact certain of the naturalists themselves became symbolists. As a definition of symbolism Mr. Symons offers the following: "What is symbolism if not an establishing of the links which hold together the world, the affirmation of an eter-

[2] See Wilbur L. Cross, *The Development of the English Novel*, p. 264.

[3] Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, p. 5.

nal, intricate, almost invisible life, which runs through the whole universe."[4] In almost the same words one might define the mysticism of the extra-realistic; and viewing symbolism in this light, one may be assured that Verlaine, Ibsen, Hauptmann, Maeterlinck, and a legion more of symbolists have helped to interest English realists in the less tangible aspects of their material.[5]

Perhaps the surest and most direct influence comes from Russian fiction, where symbolism, in its widest sense, unites both the incongruous and the extra-realistic. Here naturalism has contributed its precept that the whole unliterary truth must be told regardless of conventions: the pure must have impure thoughts, the impure must do strangely virtuous things. This effect the great Russians convey, particularly Dostoevsky, with amazing immediacy and actuality and with strangely potent simplicity. One need not look far in the pages of either Tolstoy or Dostoevsky to find a realism which, even in the amorphous style of the translator, carries an odd blend of things more than actual—almost the same air of naïve mysticism that belongs to certain of William Blake's poems.

This quality is present in the whole characterization of Tolstoy's Levin,[6] in Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov,[7] and in the Karamazovs.[8] As the English reader gropes for

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 272.

[5] See Edwin Björkman, *Voices of Tomorrow,* for suggestive discussion of the mystical in recent literature.

[6] In *Anna Karénina.*

[7] In *Crime and Punishment.* [8] In *The Brothers Karamazov.*

an understanding, he is of two minds. Does he have before him merely the ultimate truth about the human soul, a realism which disdains formalizing and simplification; or is he witnessing an utter disregard of reality, in which moments of actuality are being blended into a symbol of something too vague for summary, too mystic for normal comprehension?

As somewhat inadequate but citable instance of this there is Levin's mental summary of his brother Nikolai.

> While on the way he recalled one by one the incidents of Nikolai's life. He remembered how at the university and for a year after his graduation, he had lived like a monk, notwithstanding the ridicule of his comrades, strictly devoted to all forms of religion, services, fasts, turning his back on all pleasures, and especially women, and then how he had suddenly turned round, and fallen into the company of people of the lowest lives, and entered upon a course of dissipation and debauchery. He remembered his conduct toward a lad whom he had taken from the country to bring up, and whom he whipped so severely in a fit of anger that he narrowly escaped being transported for mayhem. He remembered his conduct towards a swindler whom he had given a bill of exchange in payment for a gambling debt, and whom he caused to be arrested: . . . . He remembered the night spent by Nikolai at the station-house on account of a spree; the scandalous lawsuit against his brother Sergei Ivanuitch, because the latter refused to pay his share of their maternal inheritance; and finally his last adventure, when, having taken a position in one of the western governments, he was dismissed for assaulting a superior. All this was detestable, but the impression of Levin was less odious than it would be on those who did not know Nikolai, did not know his history, did not know his heart.[9]

This passage will at least suggest the possibilities of extra-realism in Nikolai. These possibilities Tolstoy has

[9] *Anna Karénina*, pp. 93–94.

fully utilized. In the characters of Group III, one finds much to remind him of Nikolai.

In addition to impressionism, symbolism, and the peculiar manifestation of these forces in Russian characterization, there is another general literary influence deflecting the characterization of the realistic novel from the older ways. This tendency appears to be taking on the name "expressionism."[10] It seeks to present in detail considerable blocks of the consciousness of one individual, in order to reproduce the exact condition of mind. The expressionist presents an hour, a day, a week, of his character's mental life with all possible completeness, balking at no incongruity.

In expressionism appears an extension of the romantic idealism of the early nineteenth century which acknowledges reality only through the consciousness of the individual. Expressionism makes full exhibition of that consciousness and thereby achieves the final literary conquest of reality, usurping what has been the concern of the psychologist, the *minutiae* of thinking, feeling, and being. It has influenced verse, drama, even painting, particularly in those schools which throw upon canvas the whole mass of consciousness at any given moment in strange patchworks of image and color. In fictional characterization it tends toward the incongruous if not the extra-realistic, for the full stream of consciousness will carry the incidental and the accidental as well as that which is matter of settled habit of mind.

Impressionism, symbolism, expressionism—there re-

[10] See Edmund Wilson, Jr., "The Rag-Bag of the Soul," *Literary Review,* III (1922), 237.

mains dadaism. Perhaps this movement is too recent and of too dubious a sobriety to deserve mention here. Yet it is significant of current revolt against tradition in which the novel participates. Dadaism, originating about 1916,[11] took final shape after the world-war. Its essential doctrine is that of negation: it denies everything, even denies that it denies. It implies that each man may make not only his own literary forms but even his own language, in proof whereof it submits poems of gibberish or of non-syllabic jumbles of letters. It is perhaps a parody, a travesty of advanced literary and artistic theories; perhaps it indicates the culmination of a revolt against not merely the older themes but the older forms of composition. Upon the general progress of this revolt, this study cannot offer much in detail. That the English realistic novel has been affected is obvious. Mr. John Middleton Murry remarks of Mr. Joyce's *Ulysses:* "It is the triumph of the desire to discover the truth over the desire to communicate that which is felt as truth."[12] Much the same might be said of Mr. Lawrence and Miss Richardson, both in general and with reference to characterization.

2. DEVELOPMENTS IN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

The exact effectiveness of all those artistic and literary forces just enumerated is hard to estimate; they are both motive powers and signs of the times. Somewhat similar in this respect are the developments in science and philosophy.

[11] See Albert Schintz, "Dadaism," *The Bookman,* LV (1922), 103.

[12] "The Break-up of the Novel," *Yale Review,* January, 1922.

By the turn of the century changes had taken place in biological study helping to break up the determinism that had been important in realistic characterization. This was due in part to the swing of the philosophic pendulum toward the voluntarism of Schopenhauer, in part to the origin of biologic metaphysics in the work of Mendal, Weismann, De Vries, Bateson, and others. These men shifted from the study of survival values to a study which included individual variations. They wished to know whence come the characteristics the permanence of which environment tests; to determine, if possible, why, in the same environment, essentially the same end should be accomplished by nature in a diversity of species; and to seek for understanding of the more obvious vagaries in the transmission of characteristics. These purposes centered attention on individual variation rather than upon selection, and enlarged the conception of heredity to a roominess which includes and accounts for wide deviations from the type.[13]

Thus, since the 1870's, evolutionary study has produced a new branch of science, that of genetics, which deals with the process of fertilization and the organization of the germ cells or gametes that unite generation to generation. Between 1901 and 1905, Hugo de Vries[14] published the results of his experiments and advanced the theory that living organisms are constituted by an association or combination of separate and distinct units

[13] See Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson, *Evolution,* chap. iv; also W. C. Curtis, *Science and Human Affairs,* pp. 165–206.

[14] *Die Mutations Theorie,* Vol. I, 1901, and Vol. II, 1903. *Species and Varieties, Their Origin by Mutation,* 1905.

just as matter consists of combinations of molecules. New species have, according to this so-called mutation theory, appeared suddenly when new combinations of units have been affected. A certain confirmation of this general principle was found in Mendel's law of heredity, which was given currency about 1900. In brief, this law announces that certain antithetic characteristics in parents, such as tallness and shortness, tend in the first generation of offspring to result, not in a fusion of these qualities, but in complete disappearance of the weaker or so-called recessive characteristic. However, the offspring of this first generation tend to show either the pure recessive characteristics, or those dominant characteristics which were totally lacking in their parents but which were present in their grandparents; and so the process continues indefinitely according to a discernible arithmetical system. In other words, traits may leap whole generations.

Since 1900 the mutation theory in all its phases has undergone much adverse criticism and much modification; but it has become possible for a reputable scientist to assert that evolution operates, so to speak, in bursts of energy, rapidly organizing and perfecting a species, and then lapsing into almost complete quiescence.[15]

Thus recent biological science itself tends to break down the narrow, hard and fast quality which by the end of the nineteenth century had come to mark popular Darwinism and its attendant philosophy. Typical evidence of a transitional stage in the process of changing

[15] Edwin G. Conklin, "The Trend of Evolution," in *The Evolution of Man*, p. 161.

beliefs may be had in the writings of Mr. H. G. Wells. As usual, sensitive to the drift of general thought, he complained in 1908 of the formalism of scientific thought when applied to mankind.

> There is a growing body of people which is beginning to hold the converse view—that counting, classification, measurement, the whole fabric of mathematics is subjective and untrue to the world of fact and that the uniqueness of individuals is the objective truth. As the number of units taken diminishes, the amount of variety and inexactness of generalization increases, because individuality tells more and more. Could you take men by the thousand billions, you could generalize about them as you do about atoms, could you take atoms singly, it may be you would find them as individual as your aunts and cousins. That, concisely, is the minority belief and my belief.
>
> Now what is the scientific method in the physical sciences rests upon the ignoring of individualities; and like many mathematical conventions is no proof whatever of its final truth.[16]
>
> Comte and Herbert Spencer seem to me to have believed that cock-sure could be extended to every conceivable finite thing. The fact that Herbert Spencer called a certain doctrine Individualism reflects nothing on the non-individual quality of his primary assumptions and his mental texture. He believed that individuality (heterogeneity) was and is an evolutionary product from an original homogeneity, begotten by folding and multiplying and dividing and twisting it, and still fundamentally *it*.[17]

A current of metaphysical thought setting in the direction suggested by Mr. Wells is the reassertion of the so-called vitalist doctrine of Goethe and Lamark in the writings of Samuel Butler, M. Bergson, and Mr. Shaw. This hypothesis insists that changes are wrought

[16] *First and Last Things,* pp. 49–50. Excerpts reprinted here and subsequently by permission of the author.

[17] *Ibid.,* pp. 51–52.

for the individual and eventually for the species by process of willing and trying. Applied to man, vitalism looks to the conclusion that, in this the one creature pre-eminently endowed with will, forces may be shaped capable of defying all those of environment and most of those of heredity. There is perhaps no such thoroughgoing declaration as this in contemporary literature unless it be Nietzsche's prophecy of the *Übermensch* who is to result from man's superiority to environment and the herding instinct. Mr. Shaw, attacking Darwinism among the other Victorian shams, has at least given to vitalism a currency that it could not otherwise enjoy.

It is futile to seek for direct reflection of mutationism, vitalism, and the like in British realistic fiction, nor must it be assumed that recent biological science shows an utter departure from that of Darwin and his contemporaries. The important things are, first, that science has come to admit within its self-appointed domain much that remains frankly mystic, and has betaken itself to the study of obscure germinal processes beyond the reach of the microscope, even that such a man as Sir Oliver Lodge should turn frankly to the supernatural; and second, that attention should be directed toward the individual rather than the group. It is surely, then, not too fanciful to see a certain significance in the fact that Meredith's *The Egoist* and Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals,* both of which deal with traits common to the group, appear in the same generation; and that Mr. Lawrence's *The Lost Girl* and H. De Vries' *Species and Varieties,* both of

which have to do with deviations from type, are contemporaneous.

Among the novels dealt with in this study, Miss Sinclair's *Mary Olivier*[18] most consciously approaches matters of biology and individualism. Mary, in whose family there is a taint of insanity and sexual perversion, instructed by the learning of her parents' generation, regards heredity as inescapable and diabolical. She reads Spencer, Haeckel, Maudsley, and Ribot. She quotes from Maudsley: "There is a destiny made for man by his ancestors, and no one can elude, were he able to attempt it, the tyranny of his organization." Upon this and kindred passages, she muses as follows:

> You had been wrong all the time. You had thought of your family, Papa, Mamma, perhaps Grandpapa and Grandmamma, as powerful, but independent and separate entities, in themselves sacred and inviolable, working against you from the outside. . . . . You had thought of yourself as a somewhat less powerful, but still independent and separate unity, a sacred, inviolable self, struggling against them for complete freedom and detachment. . . . . But it was not so. There were no independent separate entities, no sacred, inviolable selves. They were one immense organism and you were part of it; you were nothing that they had not been before you. It was no good struggling. You were caught in a net; you couldn't get out.[19]

In the very phrasing of this passage you see Miss Sinclair's rejection of the malignant determinism that it expresses. Still more significant is the fact that Mary, the one unconquerable *individual* of the family, retains both self and sanity.

[18] Published in 1919.

[19] Pp. 289–90. Copyright 1919 by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

Miss Richardson has yet shown no disposition to ponder over either heredity and environment. Mr. Lawrence impatiently brushes aside all the older natural science. He says of one of his characters in *Women in Love* that the spirit of her had not come from her father. "The spirit," says Mr. Lawrence, "had not come from any ancestor, it had come out of the unknown. A child is the child of mystery or it is uncreated."[20]

It is impossible, then, to say that mutationism and vitalism have directly influenced any of the authors of Group III; but clearly these writers are well aware of the drift of contemporary thought; hence it is safe to assume that they have profited somewhat thereby and have been the more led to regard man not primarily as a social unit or a genetic moment, but as a personality, a mystic, triumphant, self-sufficing entity.

3. THE NEWER PSYCHOLOGY

Concerning the influence of psychology upon the novelists of Groups II and III there can be no question. With them psychology is not merely, like biology and related philosophy, a force urging toward rather general innovations; it is also a very specific influence, a provider of new realistic material. And this relationship of psychology to the novel is recent. It will be difficult to show that the novels of Group I embody any material obtained directly from the science of psychology. No doubt the clogging lumber of analysis and introspection in George Eliot's later novels is due somewhat to her association with G. H. Lewes and his group, and no doubt

[20] P. 291.

Meredith's devotion to the inner life is somewhat related to the fact that he wrote in the age of Bain, Mill, and Spencer.

Yet nineteenth-century psychology cannot be disregarded in this study. As a branch of science it shows the prevailing mechanistic and deterministic tendencies, contributing what is known as the theory of associationism. At its greatest extreme, this principle assumes that man is mentally a sort of automaton, operating continuously from birth to death, furnished constantly with new material by the senses and endlessly combining and recombining this thought-substance according to immutable relationships quite beyond the control of the ego. In the later decades of the century, just as the biological sciences were inclined toward more liberal views, so psychology under James Ward, M. Henri Bergson, and William James,[21] enlarged its conception. Thus associationism makes room for the study of the semi-conscious and the sub-conscious, and as James says, "restores the vague to its psychological rights."[22]

Merely to name the more recent developments of psychology is suggestive of similar developments in the realistic novel. There are, for example, experimental and individual psychology, including the study of abnormal minds. In these fields the psychologist has drawn very close to the novelist. Unhampered by narrative limits and the necessity of winning credence by probability, the former has listed astounding vagaries of behavior and has impressed upon the writer of fiction the

[21] See George S. Brett, *A History of Psychology,* Part II, chap. iv.

[22] *Principles of Psychology,* p. 266.

need of ever sharper specification of the data of consciousness. From the study of animals, savage folk, children, and crowds, the psychologist has gathered much precise information as to the deeply primitive impulses that persist even in the highly cultured.

The point of most direct contact between psychology and the realistic novel is in the use which writers of Group III have made of the study of the subconscious by Sigmund Freud and his associates. Consequently, it will be necessary to set forth at least the essentials of psychoanalysis.[23] From it, realists in fiction have received abundant inspiration to abandon the older methods of characterization.

Freud and his followers are practicing neurologists, and their theories have originated from the study of abnormal individuals. Historically, to be sure, Freud's work links up with that of Ribot, Pierre Janet, Maudsley, and other early investigators of dual personality and hysteria; it is the direct outgrowth of the labors of Dr. Joseph Beurer of Vienna; and, despite its peculiarities, it is in line with the general movement of psychology since William James.

The Freudian system recognizes three kinds of mind-stuff, the conscious, the foreconscious or preconscious, and the subconscious or unconscious. The foreconscious or preconscious is that which may with no more than ordinary effort be summoned into consciousness. The unconscious is that of which an individual is

[23] For the sake of coherence some material will be included not made use of by novelists, but the subsequent summary is by no means a complete treatment of all important researches in the subconscious.

unaware except in such dissimilative conditions as dreams and hysterias; in its true form it may be brought to consciousness only with great difficulty.[24]

The unconscious consists of memories and of processes the like of which constitute the preconscious and the conscious. The memory material for the unconscious comes in part from consciousness and in part perhaps from inheritance within the instinctive mind,[25] possibly being present in the mind of the embryo before birth. Researches of Freud have led him to the conclusion that every bit of consciousness survives either in the preconscious or in the unconscious.[26] Material slips out of the preconscious into the unconscious for various reasons, such as insignificance and unpleasantness, especially the latter. The conscious tries continually to discard all that is distateful; so-called lapses of memory are frequently due to instinctive antipathies.[27]

The unconscious is continually building up its material into unsuspected combinations.[28] In this function the unconscious tends to reduce all to the level of the primitive or infantile.[29] Upon this level it seeks expression in the conscious, a super-eternal infant seeking to return to "that stage of omnipotence where there are no

[24] See B. Low, *Outline of Psychoanalysis*, p. 25.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 42, containing citation from Freud.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 43, containing citation from Freud.

[27] See S. Freud, *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, pp. 34, 46, 53.

[28] See A. A. Brill, *Psychoanalysis, Its Theories and Practical Application*, pp. 186–87.

[29] See Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

non-filled desires in which it existed within the mother's womb."[30]

The psychic life is essentially a struggle between a man's primitive and his civilized nature. Occasionally the powerful and quite ruthless unconscious becomes dominant, as in panics or sudden aberrations; or it makes itself evident in hesitation of speech or slips of the tongue or momentary aphasia.[31] In general, the normal person effects an adjustment, the abnormal fails to do so.

Important in this compromise is a power called by Freud "sublimation," which is essentially the transforming of primitive egocentricity into something of higher value.[32] A large part of art is due, according to Freud, to the sublimation of sexual instincts. Neurotics are those who fail to sublimate their unconscious, or who do so only with great mental disturbance.[33]

That which is not sublimated is either excluded rigidly from consciousness or is transformed into terms agreeable to the conscious self. The faculty of the mind which determines what shall pass into the conscious from the unconscious Freud has named the censor. The form into which the unconscious is often transformed without sublimation is called the symbol.[34] The unconscious which fails to pass the censor is said to be repressed or suppressed. The details of this operation Freud recounts[35] figuratively. He depicts consciousness as a dignitary prepared to receive in his audience cham-

[30] Quoted in Low, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[32] See Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

[33] See Low, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[34] See Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

[35] *Op. cit.*, p. 256.

ber a limited number of psychic impulses, which are to be selected from a crowd of applicants in an antechamber. The sorting process is carried on by a watchman at the doorway. Thus are represented, in the audience chamber, consciousness, in the anteroom, the foreconscious, in the doorman, the faculty that Freud calls the censor; the unconscious is the nameless outer limbo. As the psychic impulses apply for audience, they are either admitted by the censor or they are sent back into the foreconscious or the unconscious. In fact, though successful in passing the censor, they may be recalled and ejected before they have gained the recognition of consciousness.

To complete the picture, we should add a crafty return of the suppressed impulse disguised beyond all censorious cavils. Especially does this occur in dreams, when the censor appears to relax somewhat his vigilance. According to Freud, dreams are an important means of relief for the repressed unconscious; they occur constantly in sleep and are usually forgotten in the sense that immediately after occurrence the censor calls them out of fore-consciousness.[36] The interpretation of dream-symbols has been one of the most strange phases of psychoanalysis and kindred studies.[37]

By dreams and similar indications, the psychoanalist determines the particular repression or complex which is asserting itself, and by bringing it into the conscious renders it powerless. A complex results when a group of impulses repressed in the unconscious is neither

[36] See Low, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

[37] See Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

sublimated nor able to express itself through dreams and the like.[38] Therefore it seeks expression through hysteria and other abnormal channels more or less dangerous to the individual and to society.

Dr. Jacob Adler, who originated the idea of the complex, finds that the repression of egoistic desires is chiefly responsible for difficulty arising in the unconscious. Freud believes that unsatisfied sexuality is the origin of all such trouble. Both unite in the conception that childhood is the period in which the more frequent complexes begin to form, pointing out the fact that the child is brought to "civilization" only by dint of unremitting repression of natural impulses. Of the complexes beginning in childhood, the most widely known is the Oedipus and its obverse, the Electra complex.

The general aptness of the name Oedipus complex is obvious, although it does have an extreme suggestion that is rather misleading. A male child, according to Freud,[39] even as an infant feels that his father is usurping ownership of the mother. The sexual implication here Freud frankly acknowledges, but he points out that the Oedipus myth embodies an abnormally extreme development. Nor does he assert that the son's attitude toward his parents is entirely determined by things sexual. Nevertheless the Oedipus tendency is, according to Freud, too often underestimated. Not only is it a natural disposition, but it is often confirmed by parents

[38] See Low, *op. cit.*, p. 90. See also W. Lay, *Man's Unconscious Conflict*, p. 112, for the view that the complex, though unpleasant, is not necessarily harmful.

[39] *Op. cit.*, p. 174.

who show a sexual preference among their children, fathers for daughters, mothers for sons, especially in families where there is slight love between husband and wife.

This complex, according to Freud, may render the sufferer incapable of normal affection for any member of the opposite sex. Such a condition is called fixation of affection.[40] Although essentially unconscious and without incestuous flavor, it remains fundamentally sexual.[41] It frequently produces actual hatred of the parent upon whom affection is not fixated. It is more or less present in every individual however normal, expressing itself often only in dreams.

For literary scholarship one of the most noteworthy features in the Freudian theory is the importance which it assigns to sex. Freud bases the larger part of his system upon the repression that is placed upon sexual impulses almost from birth, interpreting sexuality very freely, especially with reference to infancy. He designates as sexual such satisfactions as those of taking food or of simulating that act by sucking. "Both the perverse and normal sexuality originate from the infantile." For Freud the active, assertive part of the unconscious is sexual; and he considers the gratification of sexual desires essential to welfare even if those desires must be gratified without entire regard for social propriety. He is not to be thought of, however, as advocating licentiousness.

He has small regard for the prevailing code of eth-

[40] See *ibid.*, p. 295.

[41] See *ibid.*, p. 289.

ics,[42] which he finds neither natural nor expedient. When this social criticism is necessary as a curative measure, he offers it frankly to his patients. After the cure, Freud has no further concern; he refuses to be in the least agitated if the former patient decides that the only safe course for him is one not shaped rigidly to the conventional system of moral belief.

Dr. Carl Jung of Zurich does not find sex so all-important as it appears to Freud. Jung believes that the neurotic is one who is unable to meet the demands of his world and has recourse to infantile fancies as a recompense.[43] A yet more radical disagreement with Freud is that of Dr. Jacob Adler. He believes that the neurotic is a person afflicted with organic weakness whose conscious and unconscious life is shaped by an attempt to avoid the consequences of this inferiority, usually by some escape from reality.[44] Such persons are intensely egoistic, hence incapable of affection for others. Often the attention to this inferiority and attempts to mask it become the chief business in life. Still later developments of kindred theory are those of Dr. E. J. Kempf, who finds neurosis to be caused by a repression of any desire, whether sexual or otherwise, which arises in the autonomic apparatus. This repression causes organic disturbances which constitute the emotion experienced, and which determine the sufferer's behavior in the world.[45] And since the world-war the study of shell

[42] *Op. cit.*, p. 374.

[43] See André Tridon, *Psychoanalysis and Behavior*, p. 312.

[44] See *ibid.*, p. 325.

[45] See Tridon, *op. cit.*, pp. 331–45.

shock and its results has demonstrated that pure shock is an abundant cause of extreme neurosis.

The novelists of Group III, whose work contains the clearest instances of incongruity and extra-realism in characterization, have, with the exception of Miss Richardson, exalted the sexual. This is due not merely to the influence of Freud but to the revolt against Victorian prudery, which, as an importation from post-revolutionary France, begins with Swinburne and others in a sort of artistic bating of commonplace respectability, becomes by the turn of the century a strong force of social criticism, gains momentum by the growing interest in genetics, and rises to a crest in the general disintegration of the older way of life following the world-war.

Something might be said also concerning the influence of continental erotic literature, the works of such men as Paul Bourget, Huysman, Strindberg, Andreiev, Checkov, Gorki, and Artsibashev. Here has operated especially the revolt of the French naturalists against romantic idealization in character; and here has been displayed the naturalistic leaning toward things unpleasant. The voluntarism and individualism of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche have likewise aided, particularly the latter's theory that the mastermen who are to be the progenitors of the super-men must be freed from the stunting blight of convention, must know as law only their own wills.

The extent of this revolt against reticence upon matters of sex is marked in numberless ways, for example, in Mr. W. L. George's recent plea for two hundred pages to be added to the average English novel of three

hundred pages, this supplement to deal entirely with things sexual.[46]

It is certainly patent that sex, usually with the Freudian tinge, is everywhere present in contemporary British realism. Ordinarily this material is so pervasive in a novel that only a complete summary of the narrative will adequately show its Freudian content. The evidence submitted in this study is all drawn from Group III.

Miss Slinclair's *The Three Sisters*[47] clearly makes the blend of anti-Victorianism and the new psychology.

The three sisters are Mary, Gwendolen, and Alice Carteret, daughters of James Carteret, Vicar of Garth. The father's nature is strongly, though quite unconsciously, sensual. He has had three wives, the last of whom left him because she was "afraid of him." Alice, though fragile and childlike, has inherited her father's compulsive sexuality. Because his unconsciousness cannot endure that those near him shall have satisfaction while he remains an enforced celibate, the Vicar has moved his family to the lonely parish of Garth, thereby taking Alice from imminent marriage. Straightway, however, her interest turns toward a young doctor, Steven Rowcliffe, who has formed an equally abrupt attachment for Gwendolen Carteret. Alice develops symptoms that suggest the probability of insanity if she cannot have her will. To avert this disaster, Gwendolen

[46] *A Novelist on Novels,* p. 139.

[47] Published in 1914. By 1908, "Psychotherapy" was a regular section-heading in *The Psychological Index,* publications being fairly abundant.

breaks with her lover on some trumped-up pretext, and leaves, as she supposes, a clear field for Alice. Alice, however, shifts from Rowcliffe to a more ardent and responsive male, a neighboring farmer named Jim Greatorex, a primitive, who seduces and marries her. Rowcliffe becomes the property of Mary. The Vicar meantime has suffered apoplexy; and Gwendolen, who has been in London, returns to care for him. Rowcliffe finds that he still loves her; but Mary laps him in fattening domesticity, so that he sinks into stupid middle age and genuine indifference to his true mate Gwendolen.

The anti-Victorian element in the story will be referred to later. Of the strictly sexual element little more need be said. Perhaps it should be noted that Gwendolen and Rowcliffe have their moment of temptation but refrain for the sake of Mary and her children. Evidently this bit of self-denial the reader is to approve of, for Gwendolen says of herself and Rowcliffe that they are different from the other persons of the group, meaning that they are less under the dominance of sex. Of Alice and Mary, she says that they "can't help themselves"; and obviously the same might be said of the Vicar and Greatorex. They are all, Miss Sinclair implies, the sport of the forces that perpetuate life. Whatever may be done about such individuals, it is useless to deny their existence or to visit upon them conventional social vengeance.

The psychological aspect of the book shows the current tendencies not merely in the emphasis upon sex but in the submerged quality of much of the thinking relative to it. This appears more clearly in Mary and the

Vicar than in Alice or Greatorex. Here is a bit of the Vicar's mind:

> The outcome of his brooding (it would have shocked the Vicar if he could have traced its genesis) was an extraordinary revulsion in Rowcliffe's favor . . . . the idea of any of his daughters marrying was peculiarly disagreeable to him. He didn't know why it was disagreeable, and it would have shocked him unspeakably if you had told him why. And if you had asked him he would have had half a dozen noble and righteous reasons ready for you at his finger-ends. But the Vicar with his eyes shut could see that if Gwendolen married Rowcliffe the unpleasant event would have its compensations. He would be rid of an everlasting source of unpleasantness at home. He did not say that his egoism would be rid of an everlasting fear. He said that if Rowcliffe married Gwendolen he would keep her straight.[48]

In a technical Freudian sense this passage does not exhibit the unconscious but it reads not unlike a psychoanalist's revelation of unconscious perversity.

The Freudian view of family life colors Miss Sinclair's *Mary Olivier;* and there is psychology in the larger theme of the book, which is the Self, its essential nature and its struggles for existence.

Within the consciousness of Mary as child, girl, and woman, the reader perceives that two forces are struggling for the mastery, Mary's Self and her mother. As Mrs. Olivier is not in the least assertive or dominant, it may be assumed that in her unconscious she represents the implacably feminine and maternal.

Mary's father, whose self-gratifying petulance may be said to represent somewhat the modern notion of es-

[48] P. 168. Copyright 1914 by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

sential masculinity, can feel affection for no other member of his family than his wife. His children, particularly the three boys, are little more than rivals to be banished from home as soon as possible, although he does at times maliciously lavish attention upon his daughter.

Mary, imaginative, precocious, somewhat like George Eliot's Maggie in her need of affection, loves her elder brother by preference, then her mother, then the younger brothers. Mrs. Olivier never responds fully; her love has been given, first, to her sons, especially the eldest, then to her husband. The love, such as it is between Mrs. Olivier and Mary, fluctuates according to the changes of the half-conscious struggle in which they are engaged almost until the mother's final illness. The one who has the mastery loves the one who submits. "To be happy with her," thinks Mary of her mother, "either you or she had to be broken, to be helpless and like a little child." The most objective manifestation of this conflict is Mrs. Olivier's attempt to win from Mary lip-allegiance to the orthodox Christianity that the girl's true self repudiates.

Nor do the sons go free of this vampirish maternal self-assertion. In the midst of what appears to be, and perhaps is in large measure, a devoted mother's grief over the death of her eldest, we catch this thought in Mary's dispassionate mind: "It was her son—*her* son she loved, not Mark's real, secret self. He's got away from her at last—altogether." And to bear out this accusation there is the conversation between Mary and Mark just before his final departure for India.

"It's different with you," she said. "Ever since I began to grow up I felt there was something about Mamma would crush me if I let it. I've had to fight for every single thing I've wanted. It's awful fighting her when she's so sweet and gentle. But it's either that or go under."

"Minky—you talk as if she hated you."

"She does hate me."

"You lie." He said it softly and without any rancour.

"No. I found out years ago. She doesn't know she hates me. She never knows that awful sort of thing. And of course she loved me when I was little. She'd love me now if I stayed little, so that she could do what she liked with me; if I'd sit in a corner and think as she thinks, and feel as she feels and do what she does."

"If you did you'd be a much nicer Minx."

"Yes, except that I *should* be lying then, the whole time. Hiding my real self and crushing it. It's your *real* self she hates —the thing she can't see and touch and get at—the thing that makes you different. Even when I was little she hated it and tried to crush it. I remember things . . . ."

"You don't love her. You wouldn't talk like that about her if you loved her."

"It's because I love her. Her self. *Her* real self. When she's in the garden, planting flowers with her blessed little hands, doing what she likes, and when she's reading the Bible, and thinking about God and Jesus, and when she's with *you,* Mark, happy. That's her real self. . . . ."

. . . . . .

". . . . Would poor Minky like to be married?"

"No, I'm not thinking about that. I'd like to . . . . to get away from Mamma. . . . . You got away. Altogether, I believe you knew."

"Knew what?"

Mark's face grew stiff and red. He was angry now.

"That if you stayed you'd be crushed. Like Roddy. Like me."

"I knew nothing of the sort."

"Deep down inside you you knew. You were afraid. That's why you wanted to be a soldier. So as not to be afraid. So as to get away altogether . . . . to get away from her sweetness and gentleness so that you could be a man. . . . . You haven't got away altogether. Half of you still sticks. It'll never get away. . . . . You'll never love anybody. You'll never marry."

"No, I won't. You're right there."[49]

Then follows Mary's declaration that she will at any cost free herself from her family. Her ultimate victory has been referred to. In another connection something will be said of the sexual implication in the family relationships which this summary has named.

In Miss Sinclair's *The Romantic*[50] theories of organic deficiency find expression. The romantic seeks danger; yet at the crucial moment fails lamentably. He courts a woman; yet turns in terror from the prospect of marriage or anything approaching sexuality. He is vastly egotistic. At last a neurologist analyzes his condition: the romantic is sexually impotent, hence incapable of the more masculine conduct of life. His whole existence has been a struggle to hide his deficiency from the world and from himself.

It is difficult to say whether the principal character in *The Life and Death of Harriet Frean*[51] is the victim of a parent complex or of Miss Sinclair's hatred of the Victorian ideas of renunciation and feminine domesticity. Certainly there is more than a flavor of the Freudian beliefs.

[49] Pp. 249–51. Copyright 1919 by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

[50] Published in 1920.

[51] Published in 1920.

Harriet never really emerges from family and mother, and approaches freedom only when she finds herself loved by and in love with the fiancé of a friend. Mother and father and honor are too much for Harriet, who scarcely dares even to entertain thought of self-assertion. She relinquishes the young man, taking consolation in a sort of self-complacent satisfaction in the pangs of her denial, and conning over the ready-made Victorian doctrines of her mother. Thereafter Harriet drags out a sterile life, almost ceasing to exist when her mother dies.

> Through her absorption in her mother, some large essential part of herself had gone. It had not been so when her father died; what he had absorbed was given back to her, transferred to her mother. All her memories of her mother were joined to the memory of this now irrecoverable self.[52]

It is only a year later that she feels the vague stirring of her individual soul. She chooses a new vicar.

She accomplishes in all less than nothing. The friend for whom the lover was sacrificed degenerates into hysterical paralysis, a device whereby her unconscious self keeps possession of the man whom Harriet has bestowed upon her. He drivels away toward self-pitying senility. And Harriet at the moment of death comes full circle, the symbolic zero: her last vision is identically her first.

> The front curtains parted, showing a blond light on the corridor beyond. She saw the nursery door open, and light from the candle move across the ceiling. The gap was filled by the heavy

[52] P. 179. Copyright 1922 by The Macmillan Company. Excerpts reprinted here and subsequently by permission.

form, the obscene yet sorrowful face of [her old friend] Connie Pennefether.

Harriet looked at it. She smiled with a sudden ecstatic wonder and recognition.

"Mamma. . . . ."[53]

With such things in mind, small wonder that the whole generation of Miss Sinclair has struggled away from its Victorian parentage, horrified yet fortified by the revelations of Freud.

Miss Sinclair makes a more thoroughgoing and capable use of the Freudian principles in *Anne Severn and the Fieldings*.[54] The average reader is aware that the book introduces him to unusual mentalities, but without a psychologist's word for it he would scarcely know that he had been learning much in the matter of sublimation.[55]

The Fielding family consists of a father (who dies early in the story), the mother, and three sons—Eliot, Jerrold, and Colin. Anne's connection with the family begins in early childhood when, after the death of her mother and her father's departure for India, she is given into the care of the Fieldings.

Mrs. Fielding is an egocentric of the sort that is convinced of the disinterest of purely selfish motives. She will stoop to anything to gain love-mastery; she will sacrifice anyone to avoid an unpleasantness. She poses always to herself and to her world as gentle, affection-

[53] The final page of the narrative.

[54] Published in 1922.

[55] See Sylvia Strangnell, "A Study in Sublimations," *Psychoanalytic Review*, X (April, 1923), 209.

ate, beautiful in soul and body. In direct contrast to her is Anne, the acme of candor and self-abnegation, whose life is centered in love for Jerrold. He is his mother's favorite, and from her he inherits his one great weakness, an inability to face distasteful realities. The neglected, neurotic younger son, Colin, turns to him for a love denied him by his mother. The oldest son, Eliot, scientist and truth-worshiper, always quite aware of his mother's nature, goes his way unattached except for an unrequited love for Anne.

The clearest instances of sublimation in the book are those of Eliot and Anne. He turns his love for her into devotion to science and the medical profession. Anne, rejected by Jerrold because, with hysterical sensitivity he cannot forget her part in the terrible scenes of his father's deathbed, vents her repressed love by service to Jerrold's family, mothering both Mrs. Fielding and Colin, who suffers shell shock in the war.

The final situations contain much of psychological interest. Jerrold, compelled by military service to face difficulties, purges all horror from his recollection of Anne and returns to claim her. The union is prevented by his mother because she wishes Anne to continue with the burden of Colin; and Jerrold, expecting soon to be killed at the front, marries Maisie, who furnishes the reader an interesting display of hysteria quite the reverse of sublimation. Her unconsciousness knows that Jerrold does not love her, and to prevent a revelation of his indifference, stirs up the violent but not dangerous heart malady of false angina, which manifests itself upon any suggestion of marital intimacies. When she is

told the truth, the malady disappears. Maisie, who in her consciousness is as self-denying as Anne, gives up Jerrold and breaks the strained triangle in which strangely complicated pity and unsatisfied love have held the man and the two women.

A much more difficult book to treat in any summary is Mr. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*.[56] It seems fairly clear, however, that the Oedipus complex is the largest psychological element in the narrative.

Paul Morel is the child of a union between incompatible personalities. His mother, a woman of great innate force, determines from his birth to find in him consolation for her unhappy marriage. Paul shows from infancy the deepest attachment to her, a love intensified by lack of childish playmates and by the abusive treatment which she receives from her husband. Paul comes to maturity with but one ambition, that of living at home. Obviously he is the victim of fixation of affection.

Consequently he is unable to feel normal response to the women who might have aroused his mating instinct. The novel consists chiefly of his soul-conflicts over the two rivals of his mother. The first of these is Miriam Leiver, a girl of spiritual and bodily beauty. He is by all that is normal within him drawn toward her; but his perversity resists, drives him to deny every suggestion of love for her, disguises his healthier responses by fluxes of fear, repulsion, almost hatred. Tortured,

[56] Published in 1913. The view presented in this summary is substantially in agreement with that of A. B. Kuttner in "*Sons and Lovers:* A Freudian Appreciation," *Psychoanalytic Review,* III (1916), 295.

completely unable to comprehend his own emotions, Paul allows himself to put Miriam aside, at least temporarily, and glories in his devotion to his mother, showering upon her the attentions of a lover.

The second woman is Clara Dawes, who has for Paul merely a sensual attraction. Because he feels no affection for her, he does not sense her as a dangerous rival of his mother, or as a force that can dominate his ego as can Miriam. Stimulated by contact with her, he returns for a time to Miriam, and in a half-childish attempt to assert his virility, vents upon her his sexual desires, only to find that satisfaction does not result. He cannot love her. He goes back to Clara and tries vainly to find rest in frank sensuality. That episode soon has its finish.

Paul comes now to comprehend dimly the nature of his relation to his mother. He begins to feel for her the bursts of hatred that he felt for Miriam, yet he continues to love her. At length his mother sickens of an incurable disease; and Paul, half demented with grief in which is mingled a desperate yearning for freedom, administers an overdose of opiate and ends her life.

Yet her death does not free him. He cannot tolerate the thought of returning to either Miriam or Clara; he cannot separate his ego from that of the woman who has gone. The book ends on this note.

In Miss Rebecca West's *The Judge*,[57] the Oedipus complex works a tragedy almost grotesque in bare recital. There is also a continual play of modern psychologizing all through the book; scarcely a page but has

[57] Published in 1922.

its shrewd bit of iconoclastic analysis; and never is the reader at far remove from "that place beneath the consciousness where the soul debates of its being."[58]

Richard Yaviland, victim of the Oedipus complex, suffers this fixation of affection on his mother, Marion, as the result of the miseries which beset her during pregnancy and throughout his childhood. She has been deserted, disgraced, stoned in her village street, forced into marriage with a man not the father of her unborn child; she finds compensation in a love which is more than maternal and which is returned in kind, although Richard is never conscious of more than a normal son's affection.

After various unsatisfactory ventures in love, he finds a woman who responds to him and to whom he responds with romantic completeness. All is well until he brings Ellen home for his mother's inspection. The difficulty is not that Marion is hostile to Ellen, but that Richard in the presence of Marion goes suddenly cold toward Ellen. Although Marion cannot deny a certain exultation, she perceives that Ellen can make Richard happy as can no other woman—except his mother. The solution is Marion's suicide. Yet Marion does not know the Oedipus complex. Richard is not free. It is evident that he will very shortly join his mother in the exact manner in which she went, pausing merely long enough to slay his irritating half brother and to beget an illegitimate child, in whom Ellen may be at liberty to fabricate even more ingenious suppressions than those afflicting his father.

[58] P. 207.

Less melodramatic and equally poetical in style is Miss West's *The Return of the Soldier*.[59]

Christopher Baldry, invalided by shell shock, suffers complete forgetfulness of his past from a point fifteen years earlier. This point had been the culmination of an idyllic love affair, the termination of which by a quarrel lies within the period blank to his recollection. He cannot accept as realities his own maturity, his selfish, frivolous wife, his business responsibilities; and he finds content only in a sort of half childish, wholly poetic soul-communion with the woman who had been the girl of his earlier passion.

His case is diagnosed by a psychoanalist: "His unconscious self is refusing to let him resume his relations with his normal life, and so we get this loss of memory."[60] All of this character's comments are significant, reflecting the Freudian ideas as they appear to the writer of fiction.

> There's a deep self in one, the essential self, that has its wishes. And if those wishes are suppressed by the superficial self, —the self that makes, as you say efforts, and usually makes them with the sole idea of putting up a good show before the neighbors, —it takes its revenge. Into the house of conduct erected by the superficial self it sends an obsession, which doesn't, owing to a twist that the superficial self, which isn't candid, gives it, seem to bear any relation to the suppressed wish. A man who really wants to leave his wife develops a hate for pickled cabbage which may lead straight to the asylum.[61]

[59] Published in 1918.

[60] P. 160.

[61] *Loc. cit.* Copyright 1918 by George H. Doran Company, Publishers. By permission of George H. Doran Company.

To consciousness of a world of war and adult responsibilities, Baldry is restored by being shown the toys of his only child, five years dead.

These illustrations indicate the nature of psychological material in the recent realistic novel; for by tone and by every other evidence of an author's intention, the books cited are all realistic. They are not, after the manner of much romance, written for the sake of marvels sure to thrill but susceptible of explanation silencing skepticism. They do not coax credence; they demand it. They are unanimous in their tacit assumption that what they depict is merely new truth about the large average of life, a concept of normality expanded to include much that late-Victorians regarded as abnormal. They enforce this truth by every device at the command of their author.

The writers of these novels are pioneers moving to occupy territory opened to them by science, philosophy, and by literature itself. There is some self-consciousness as old boundaries are crossed and some going out of the way to demolish time-honored conventions, but iconoclasm is not the prime incentive. In nothing do the new realists find more substantial and unfailing help than in the later psychology. The hypothesis of the unconscious gives authority for strange assertions about human nature and for the proclamation of the mystic and the hitherto inexplicable as a component of daily living.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL ASPECTS OF RECENT CHARACTERIZATION

1. THE INCONGRUOUS

In the summaries of novels from Group III with which the preceding chapter concludes, there is an abundance of highly suggestive material. Even a rapid survey of those narratives will, for example, do much to demonstrate that the thing called here incongruity must be recognized in the more extreme of recent characterizations. From the reading of these summaries and the matter introductory to them should come, too, a clearer notion of what the term incongruity implies. To say that the characters in Group III display incongruity is but a manner of saying that under the sanction of all the larger powers and forces at work upon the literature of the period, realists now feel that they have attained a new freedom. By virtue of this freedom they present in the assured and insistent manner of realism, characters that to the reader trained in the older conception of normality and the older technique of fiction seem highly extraordinary, particularly in their possession of antithetical traits.

An attempt to get at the source of the incongruity in these portrayals will show that the effect has two general origins. It may result when the author relates compulsive assertions of the unconscious, or it may result

when he sets forth the full content of his character's consciousness.

This study is not designed to show how these two kinds of incongruity develop from the carefully centered complexity in the characters of Group I. It is enough to note that among the first recognizable approaches toward incongruity in the realism of late-Victorian times are certain of the major characters in Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*[1] and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.[2]

Mention of *The Way of All Flesh* calls to mind the revolt against convention and the importance for the more advanced novelist of things frankly sexual. There is also in the novel Butler's strong scientific interest. The effect of these influences as they issue in characterization is best seen in the figure of Ernest Pontifex and his un-Victorian aberrations. Within a period of six months he changes from Christianity to atheism, from gentility to artisanship, from respectability to cohabitation with a prostitute, from dutiful affection for his parents to determined hatred. Yet these antithetical suggestions do not give the character an air of incongruity, for Samuel Butler, vigorous iconoclast though he is, does not attempt to disrupt the form of fiction and writes, to the best of his ability, according to the old models. Thus he takes pains to show that Ernest, outwardly mild and submissive, had long had "inarticulate feelings of revolt too swift and sure to be translated into such debatable things as words, but practically as

[1] Written between 1872 and 1884.

[2] Published in 1886.

follows . . . ."—for a compact page.[3] Also Ernest's change is fully explained as the result of profound shock due to his arrest and hurried imprisonment to hard labor. In short, Ernest Pontifex, though near to incongruity, does not attain it.

There is a much closer approach to incongruity in the characterization of Michael Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Here is a man who, irritated by the burden of an early marriage and somewhat under the influence of liquor, offers his wife publicly to the highest bidder, yet when the sale has been effected tries patiently to find and reclaim her; who thereafter masters his desire for strong drink and by twenty years of industry and the exercise of untutored shrewdness becomes a man of property and the mayor of his town; who, when the wife reappears, dutifully remarries her. Shortly after this, childishly jealous concerning public regard, he turns upon Donald Farfrae, the young Scotchman who has been his trusted employee and friend, and plots secretly to ruin him. In this, Henchard fails; yet all possibility of a later triumph he destroys through a public acknowledgment when he is by chance accused of selling his wife. Discovering that his supposed daughter is the child of the man to whom her mother was sold, Henchard drives the girl from home. All his property lost, he humbles himself by working for Farfrae, and he publicly disgraces himself upon the occasion of a royal visit to the town. Again he plots harm to Farfrae, but he cannot bring himself to execute his plans. He then becomes reconciled to his foster daughter. Finally,

[3] P. 147.

when the girl's true father appears, Henchard, after various attempts to deceive him as to the identity of his daughter, leaves home and becomes a wanderer. His death is caused, apparently, by sheer heartbreak.

Now, it is possible to suggest a unifying principle in all this. Professor J. W. Beach shrewdly names vanity, a childish and rather pitiful vanity such as a savage might display.[4] The point is, however, that Hardy does not give any such explanatory formula, nor does he take pains to shade one state of Henchard's mind into another. He merely offers the facts, and the facts do not at all sort themselves into the patterns of typical realistic characterization. Was Hardy intent upon the absolute, unqualified truth about a very specific and in general normal individual; or was he intent only upon the large moments of the action and upon arranging a cycle of events such that in the end Henchard might be reduced to the condition in which he is first presented? There is much to make one prefer the latter view.

In general summary upon Ernest Pontifex and Michael Henchard, one may say that the former is executed in the spirit of incongruity rather than in its manner, but the latter is executed in the manner of incongruity rather than in its spirit. Eventually the spirit comes closer to producing the manner, as will be evident from the inspection of the characters in which so confirmed an anti-Victorian as Miss Sinclair strikes at the traditions and formalized conceptions of the older generation. Here is induced a sense of incongruity in characterization which might perhaps be designated by refer-

[4] *The Technique of Thomas Hardy*, pp. 147–57.

ence to the conscious or the unconscious, but which merits separate discussion because it is rather distinct in itself and because it makes a good approach to the incongruity of the unconscious.

In brief, Miss Sinclair's method is to graft upon a well-established literary or social type a sexuality either repressed or fully expressed that clashes with all the traditional attributes of the type, attributes which rise unbidden to the mind of the reader as soon as the type is named. The result is a distortion that is never far from incongruity and at times reaches it.

In *The Three Sisters* the clearest instance of this is Alice, outwardly frail and virginal, inwardly a creature of strong desire. Here is something that runs counter to one of the most insistent Victorian traditions that have been embodied in the characters of fiction. Jim Greatorex with his odd animality, his air of the amiable hetiger, does not offer any such effect. The Vicar with his exasperated celibacy is perhaps a trifle nearer to it, being notably unlike the type-figure which the term vicar calls up in the reader's mind. In Mary Carteret, where sex wars with a pleasant and widely established tradition and type, that of the Sweet Woman, evoking in her all that is sly and pitiless—even here one regretfully acquiesces and understands, recalling that Miss Sinclair writes of a world in which there are not men enough to go round. But in Alice, the tradition of innocent girlhood is attacked with animus; and one is aware of something very close indeed to incongruity.

In *Mary Olivier* sex runs everywhere under the surface of the narrative. It does not emerge so clearly as in

The Three Sisters, but it pulls hard upon many of the characters. For the reader reared in the tradition of what Mr. Lawrence scoffingly calls "the Holy Family," there is something essentially unparental in the characters of Mary's father and mother. Through them Miss Sinclair thrusts vigorously at yet another tottering Victorian tradition. Possibly when the echoes marking the fall of the family have subsided, Mr. and Mrs. Olivier may not seem at all incongruous, but that day is not yet. One may feel a like quality in Mark, Mary's adored elder brother, sensible, hardy, matter-of-fact in every way, yet confessing himself a lifelong celibate by reason of attachment to his mother.

Concerning *The Romantic,* one can only feel that the central figure with its unconscious yet desperate struggle against its sexual disability, is stuff of which incongruity is made. Even the diagnosis which Miss Sinclair offers does not bring the character so far into accord with the older conception of normality as, for example, does Butler's explanation of Ernest Pontifex.

In last analysis, however, the value of these instances from Miss Sinclair's novels is not so much in their exhibition of striking incongruity as in their suggestion of the part which the anti-Victorian spirit and the newer knowledge of sex play in recent characterization. Both of these forces are of consequence in the incongruity due to impulses from the unconscious.

This latter effect is found abundantly in the novels of Mr. Lawrence. He uses the sexuality of the unconscious as a means of attack upon his chosen detestations, the family and love both romantic and parental;

also he uses the sexuality of the unconscious as a prime motive force in his narrative and as a basis for his more important characterizations. Consequently Mr. Lawrence's people do strange and incongruous things. Of this he is quite aware. He is frankly for extending realism into the realm of the exceptional. He declaims against all restricting typifications in the novel: "Why have standards and a regulation pattern? Why have a human criterion? There's the point! Why in the name of all the free heavens have human criteria? Why? Simply for bullying and narrowness."[5] In another connection Mr. Lawrence observes: "It is remarkable how many odd or extraordinary people there are in England. We hear continually of the stodgy dullness of the English. It would be quite as just to complain of their freakish, unusual character. . . . ."[6] In short, Mr. Lawrence, author of a volume appropriately entitled *The Fantasia of the Unconscious*[7] and of several novels whose subtitles might resemble the name given to *The Fantasia,* is exponent and practitioner of incongruity in characterization.

Confirmation of this view lies in almost any of these novels, *Sons and Lovers* for example. Only to one who has dwelt long with Freudian theories will Paul Morel not appear incongruous, for Mr. Lawrence has nowhere in the book offered even so much as a psychoanalytical explanation of circumstances. Paul seems, therefore, a strange duality. Viewed in one way he appears essentially gentle, genial, impractical, unselfish, a devoted,

[5] *Lost Girl,* p. 59.

[6] *Aaron's Rod,* p. 31.

[7] Published in 1922.

sympathetic son and an idyllic lover; from another point of view he is a hotly lusting male held back from satiation only by an overweening egotism, with no sense of social responsibility, taking all, giving nothing, venting his disappointment in petulant hate for the women who cannot satisfy him.

In Mr. Lawrence's *The Lost Girl,*[8] the unconscious again produces startling incongruities of character, obvious enough from bare summary of the narrative, and previously referred to here in the person of Alvina Houghton.

She is the daughter of a somewhat aesthetic shopman in a small midland city. Neither her father nor her somewhat neurotic mother figures largely in Alvina's life. The place of real importance is taken by a one-time governess, Miss Frost, whose influence is always everything that propriety could desire. Alvina grows to a delicate, refined young-ladyhood, undistinguished in all things.

When she is about twenty-three, strange manifestations begin to appear. She all but marries a dubiously dusky and fatly sensual Australian with "dark and impertinent muzzle." Hard upon this aberration comes Alvina's abrupt, utterly uninfluenced decision to become a maternity nurse. At the hospital she thrives amain, develops "the nurse's leer," becomes "a rather fat, warm-colored young woman, strapping and with a certain bounce."

It would not be fair to say that Mr. Lawrence gives the reader absolutely no help with Alvina, but he as-

[8] Published in 1920.

suredly does not remove the incongruity. He refers in earlier pages of the novel to an "ironic tilt" of Alvina's eyelids and to occasional fits of hilarity. From these slight evidences the properly instructed may infer that Alvina is in some way the victim of Miss Frost's frigid suppression. Occasionally Mr. Lawrence offers more detailed explanation, such as that which comes at the start of the hospital episode.

> Was Alvina her own real self all this time? The mighty question arises upon us, what is one's own real self? It is certainly not what we think we are and ought to be. Alvina had been bred to think of herself as a delicate, tender, chaste creature with unselfish inclinations and a pure "high" mind. Well, so she was, in the more or less exhausted part of herself. But high-mindedness had really come to an end with James Houghton her father, had really reached the point, not only pathetic but dry and anti-human, repulsive quixotry. In Alvina high-mindedness was already stretched beyond the breaking point. Being a woman of some flexibility of temper, wrought through generations to a fine, pliant hardness, she flew back. She went right back on high-mindedness.[9]

The sense of incongruity in Alvina surely remains after a deal of such accounting for her.

Her going back upon high-mindedness takes unique forms, among others a primitive Amazonian fury that comes upon her in many an amatory tussle with young doctors.

> Sometimes her blood really came up in the fight, and she felt as if with her hands, she could tear any male creature limb from limb. A superhuman, voltaic force filled her. For a moment she surged in massive, inhuman, female strength. The men always wilted.[10]

[9] P. 42. Excerpts reprinted here and subsequently by permission of the publisher, Thomas Seltzer, Inc.

[10] P. 46.

She returns to her home and straightway lapses again into repressed, sedate decency. But she has not voided all her orgasmic impulses, and in the unconscious she is dominated by the idea of finding "love, a man." In her thirtieth year, through the medium of her father's final erratic business venture, a cheap variety house, she meets Ciccio, a dancer. Then, fascinated by the man's animal eyes and lithe animal body, she becomes a lost girl. She surrenders to him utterly, yielding up her very identity with a mixture of emotions distressing to contemplate. "Her soul sank away out of her body, left her there powerless, soulless."

For a time she breaks away. The final mastering of her ego comes when, abruptly leaving congenial friends and a secure future, she follows Ciccio to his old home in the remoter Appenines, to lead a peasant's life in an alien, pagan land.

It may be noted in passing, that the general implication of this novel is as deterministic as the strictest naturalism; Alvina is supine before the power that enslaves her. Yet *The Lost Girl* differs from the older naturalism in its wider conception of heredity and in the fact that the compulsive forces shaping character are not external. Alvina is immolated to her unconsciousness and her sexuality; but though in last analysis quite as helpless as Hardy's Tess and Jude or as Moore's Esther Waters and Kate Ede, unlike them she does exactly and always just what she wants to. The more important aspect of Alvina, however, for the present study is that by virtue of the unconscious she remains from first to last an uncertain and incongruous personality.

In *Aaron's Rod*[11] Mr. Lawrence has widened his interpretation of the unconscious. He makes it include much more than sexuality and implies that the ego and its assertions constitute the driving force in life. Again he experiments freely with incongruity.

Aaron Sisson, secretary of the local miners' union, first appears just returned from a meeting of his organization to the cozy little house that he has himself built. With quiet amiability he sets up a Christmas tree for his two small daughters. Beyond a certain preoccupation there is about him no indication of untoward things. He is a bit indifferent to his wife's complaining, but he good-naturedly comforts one of the girls who chances to break a pretty Christmas bauble. Except for the sense of the recently ended war, there is in the house an air of "changeless pleasantness." The reader mentally catalogues Aaron as an intelligent artisan, quiet, industrious, perhaps a bit finer in grain than the average, the latter idea coming from Aaron's skill with the flute.

After a little practice on his flute, Aaron betakes himself to a public house, where he converses for the evening with the hostess and a group of miners. It appears then that Aaron has had more than mere friendly relations with this woman. He has had recourse to her as he had to drink and to music, in order to dissolve a "hard opposing core in him . . . . strained unacknowledged opposition to his surroundings, a hard core of irrational, exhausting withholding of himself."[12] Now Aaron grows angry because he cannot respond to the woman's wiles. His state becomes that of "to hell with

[11] Published in 1922. [12] P. 26.

good-will." The reader, not greatly aided by the "hard core" of explanation thrown him by Mr. Lawrence, and seeing in Aaron of the public house little more than the name to link him with the quiet, good-natured flute-player, goes back vainly through the semi-socialistic talk of the miners and the more or less salacious innuendoes of the hostess to discover what has wrought so mightily upon Aaron.

But Aaron's vagary is scarcely begun. He starts home from the public house, "but the devil was in it if he could take a stride in the homeward direction." After a moment's hesitation, he sets out upon a side road. Never again does he walk up the high road to his cottage. Without plan, without a conscious justification for his act, he abandons home and family forever.

The reader gropes on then for many pages. How can one with anything resembling the older view of humanity account for this man in terms of the normal, but is not one asked to make the effort? Aaron appears not without real affection for his wife and children. He returns stealthily to his home, finds a child ill, and is torn with grief that he cannot remain. Yet go he must and for no valid reason that is apparent to either himself or the reader. "I'm damned if I want to be a lover any more," is the nearest approach to an explanation in the first seven chapters. In fact, Mr. Lawrence seems quite indifferent to any sense of unity in this characterization, for he does not even describe Aaron in a manner to establish identity.

It is only in the ninth chapter that the reader comes by knowledge that he can, if he will, carry back and

attempt to piece into the earlier scenes. We learn then through the discourse of Lilly (a man, it should be said) that Aaron's unconsciousness has been guiding him. Thanks to it he has fled the greatest danger of the age—man's subjection to his home, his family, love in all its forms. The ego, in other words, working through the unconscious, is responsible for Aaron. Even so Aaron remains beyond the radius of the older normality; he is brother to Alvina, the thrall of strange powers, thereby incongruous.

Thus in Paul, Alvina, and Aaron has Mr. Lawrence demonstrated one possibility in the newer mode of realism. He might be cited to instance other varieties of the incongruous. There is Jim Bucknell, for example, the raw-boned six-footer, meticulous in dress, utterly blasé, anarchistic, sexually satiated, a thirty-eight-year-old ex-officer of cavalry, who in season and out declares with all seriousness that he is dying for love, and who, to prevent his demise, gorges continually to repletion. But after all Jim need not be resorted to. Mr. Lawrence's people have served sufficiently to illustrate one specific effect—the incongruity of the unconscious.

That other aspect of incongruity referred to here as the incongruity of the conscious may be most clearly seen in the expressionist novels of Miss Richardson. It is also measurably evident in Mr. Joyce's books, though in them far less a dominant mode of narrative than with Miss Richardson. *Ulysses* in particular is not, as commonly supposed, the type of pure expressionism. It is largely impersonal in method, as much satire and parody as expressionistic realism.

To find this expressionism in *Ulysses* one must be circumspect. Mr. Joyce is at times so deliriously dadaistic that for many and many a page it is not safe to attribute effects to anything but sheer freakishness of language. Yet the reader must learn to know when the dadaism expresses recognizable ideas, rendered with absolute literalness of impression. Such a passage as "Her wavyavyeavyheavyeavyevyevy hair un comb'd"[13] may, if the reader be of liberal disposition, have meaning and suggestion.

Another difficulty is that Mr. Joyce employs a device which, at first reading, makes sad confusion as to point of view and blurs the true expressionistic quality: "Stephen [who was alone] closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time."[14]

Two men appear to be speaking here, the author and Stephen. But after some pages of this sort of thing, one discovers that Mr. Joyce uses pronouns to indicate levels of awareness in the same consciousness—the third person for the rather external, sensory perception; the second for a somewhat closer contact; the first for the full flavor of the experience. This is not, however, the invariable rule; often the one who uses the third person *is* the author. Sometimes there is no use of quotation marks or the like to indicate that the direct thought of a fictional character follows the comment of the author.

Mr. Bloom, glancing sideways up from the cross he had made, saw the foreman's sallow face, think he has a touch of jaundice,

[13] P. 266. [14] P. 37.

and beyond the obedient reels feeding in huge webs of paper. Clank it clank it. Miles of it unreeled. What becomes of it? O, wrap up meat, parcels; various uses, thousand and one things.[15]

Here, up to the moment of the direct thought we have been for a page or more viewing Mr. Bloom quite objectively.

But when all has been said, there is no denying that *Ulysses* contains large blocks of expressionistic character portrayal. Therein appears one pervasive result of this method, a certain confusedness and lack of definition which is never far from downright incongruity.

Leopold Bloom will serve as an instance. In the third chapter or section of *Ulysses,* the reader is for some eighty pages engulfed in a stream of Bloom's thinking; then comes an objective portrayal of the man that does much to centralized impressions. Now, if the reader will stop short of this objective portrayal, he will have had ample illustration of character-making by the most radical expressionism. And he will have some difficulty in phrasing all of Bloom's traits. Peeping Tom nastiness is of course evident, but beyond this trait there is a vagueness of active lust, messy affection, and semi-poetic Hebrew imagining. True enough there are not many elements here totally incompatible with one another, provided one set to work and find a unifying principle. But this is not so easy as might appear. One cannot note the distinctive qualities of a torrent in which he is being half-drowned, whirled upstream by eddies, drawn by cross-currents, and rolled fathom-deep in a mass of mind-stuff. Even after one has safely

[15] P. 116.

emerged and closed the book, he will not have the clear knowledge of what the tumult was all about that might be possessed by one who had been given a more generalized account of the adventure, a more bird's-eye view of the district in which it occurred. Possibly this greater, rather more artful clarity of view is not always desirable in realism. Beyond doubt, a blurring of significances is one possible aspect of actuality in life, for if an object be held sufficiently close to the face, outlines will appear only by effort, by walling and crossing of the eyes. Desirable or not, either in art or in life, this lack of focus is, as Mr. Joyce abundantly demonstrates, part and parcel of a thoroughly headlong expressionistic portrayal; frequently it is a declaration of incongruity in the person depicted.

As has been suggested, the more comprehensive study of the incongruity of the conscious may be made from Miss Richardson's work. In her *Pilgrimage*[16] Miss Richardson is volume by volume detailing the biography of one individual, Miriam Henderson, from adolescence to maturity, perhaps to old age. The point of view is constantly and unremittingly Miriam's. We know the world about her only as she sees and knows it; Miriam herself we see usually in the mirror. Apparently Miss Richardson has tried to present as nearly as possible the actual center of Miriam's consciousness and has refused to direct into that center anything but what might in actual life be evident there. This, at any rate, is a convenient designation of the reason for omitting, as Miss Richardson does, things interpretative and explanatory,

[16] All references apply to individual volumes in the series.

large pervasive or enveloping concepts and retrospective facts which one rarely phrases distinctly to himself but which abide in memory and really give life its continuity. Also Miss Richardson gives to each bit of consciousness the intensity that it might have in actual life, a strength or weakness of impression that may have no direct relation to its importance. The ending of *Honey Comb* gives a fair instance of her method.

> The bony old woman held Miriam closely clasped in her arms. "You must never as long as you live, blame yourself my gurl." She went away. Miriam had not heard her come in. The pressure of her arms and her huge body came from far away. Miriam clasped her hands together. She could not feel them. Perhaps she had dreamed that the old woman had come in and said that. Everything was a dream; the world. I shall not have any life. I can never have any life all my days. There were cold tears running into her mouth. They had no salt. Cold water. They stopped. Moving her body with difficulty against the unsupporting air she looked slowly about. Everything was airy and transparent. Her heavy hot light impalpable body was the only solid thing in the world, weighing tons; and like a lifeless feather. There was a tray of plates of fish and fruit on the table. She looked at it, heaving with sickness and looking at it. I am hungry. Sitting down near it she tried to pull the tray. It would not move. I must eat food. Go on eating food, till the end of my life. Plates of food like these plates of food. . . . . I am in eternity . . . . where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched.[17]

From data scarcely more explicit than this, the reader has learned that Miriam's mother has gone insane, possibly has committed suicide. The old woman in the first sentence of the passage has never been mentioned

[17] P. 285. By permission of the author. Miss Richardson's punctuation is followed in this and in all subsequent excerpts from her works.

before; she is probably the landlady of the seaside boarding-house where the event occurs. What has happened? Something Miriam might have prevented. Make what you will of it. Miriam knows what it is; that is enough according to Miss Richardson's method.

The suppression of interpretative, transitional, and unifying ideas does, no doubt, have some effect upon the characterization produced through Miriam's consciousness; nevertheless the experience of looking through Miriam's eyes and thinking her thoughts is close to the diffused, unreflective quality of actual consciousness in full stream, especially when it is recording complex personality. Presentation of individuals so unusual as those in Mr. Lawrence's books does not result; but by contrast with traditional literary characterization, the portrayals coming from the use of actuality in consciousness will appear strongly colored with incongruity.

Fraulein Pfaff[18] will serve as an illustration of the more complex persons observed by Miriam. Mistress of a private school in Germany, she welcomes Miriam as teacher of English, treats the girl with every consideration, and wins her thorough respect. Then comes a day when Miriam suddenly discovers Fraulein Pfaff berating an inoffensive man, old enough to be Miriam's father, who had shown a mild interest in the girl. Shortly after this Miriam finds Fraulein Pfaff in a desperate screaming quarrel with a servant. And there is also a thunderstorm in which Fraulein Pfaff grovels and shrieks with fear. At last she indirectly accuses Miriam of telling in-

[18] In *Pointed Roofs.*

decent stories to the girls of the school; yet at separation she bids Miriam affectionate farewell.

Now here is complexity. By the older method of characterization it would remain complexity; viewed through Miriam's consciousness it becomes incongruity. The reader comes to know Fraulein Pfaff only by the glimpses of her that appear in Miriam's mind, glimpses shaped always by Miriam's mood of the moment. The more important of these are as follows:

> Fraulein Pfaff seemed to hover and smile about the girl as if afraid to speak to her. . . . .
>
> Tall Fraulein Pfaff, sitting as if enthroned on a high-backed chair.
>
> Her delicate caustic voice. . . . .
>
> . . . . Calm voice almost a whisper. . . . .
>
> Wide eye that was so strange. She [Miriam] glanced fearfully at its unconsciousness yet tried to find words for the quick youthfulness of her steady eyes.
>
> Calling the girls in a singing voice of affectionate raillery.
>
> Her wide smile was creasing and caverning under her hat.

These details as they appear in the book are scarcely more productive of any unity than may be felt in the foregoing list; nor does the book anywhere furnish even so much of a summary of Fraulein Pfaff as has been provided here. Yet the character, for all its lack of center, is real. It has some such reality as that attained by the characterization of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, not

that of Flaubert, even less of George Eliot or Meredith; it has the reality of literal transcription rather than of artful representation.

What should one say of the incongruity in certain of Miss Richardson's characterizations, then, except that it is the incongruity of actual, unedited consciousness? Such tentative, vague interpretations or such a sense of out-and-out confusedness as rests with the reader who sees Fraulein Pfaff through Miriam's eyes approaches the impression which persons of her kind leave upon us in real life. Do not even the more simple souls of our acquaintance at times puzzle us by sorely failing "to be themselves?"

Miriam herself is touched with this same incongruity of the actual. If one sum up evidence, particularly in the earlier volumes of *Pilgrimage,* he will find himself drawn now in one direction, now in another. One may see in Miriam frankness, fairness, sensitivity, deep joy of life, self-abnegation; or one may see indirection, shirking, moodiness, coldness, intense egoism. The truth is that one never phrases any formula for Miriam any more clearly than she does herself. It is scarcely exaggeration to say that the reader, living as he does Miriam's very moods page after page, dwelling always within her mind, is so far identified with her that he can no more reduce her to formula than he can so reduce himself. Just as one, if he be frank with himself, recognizes his own inconsistencies, so he remains not greatly perturbed by hers, but perhaps because of them he feels her entity the more keenly.

Thus Miss Sinclair, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Joyce, and

Miss Richardson, representatives of the newer technique and the newer purpose in realism, all demonstrate that revolt against the older concept and search for the utter truth lead toward incongruity in characterization. These authors are instanced because, among many, they represent clearly recent extremes in fictional actuality and in the widening of the sense of normality that, in the attempt at the voicing of the utter truth, have produced incongruity.

As for normality, these extremists have extended its bounds in two modes. In the first place, they have expanded it to account for much heretofore anomalous. Where the Victorian sensationalists tried merely to authenticate the existence of the exceptional and valued it for its very abnormality, the later realists are constantly working up to the inference that a large part of the unusual and eccentric is normal. In the second place, the expressionistic realists are asserting that the stream of normal consciousness is marvelously deep and wide and heterogeneous. They are seeking to exhibit mental life unshapen by conformity to any sort of thesis, exploring sections of consciousness large enough for adequate observation, and utilizing art chiefly to sharpen the reader's perceptive faculties. Of these two tendencies, the evidences are abundant in recent narrative; incongruity in characterization is perhaps but one of them; it chances, however, to be rather striking and rather easy of definition.

2. THE EXTRA-REALISTIC

If it be granted that realism seeks, concerning life, the final and utter truth, then even prose realism may

be admitted to secure effects not ordinarily deemed realistic or prosaic. To tell the complete spiritual truth about the average or the normal may require something closely akin to poetry. To find the very quintessence of actuality and of physical entity may lead likewise to ends unrealistic. In other words, the whole truth about a normal, even a mediocre individual, may well mean the setting forth of fine and elusive phases of personality; the final exploration of actuality and of entity conscious or unconscious may lead straight into the super-sensuous and the metaphysical. Even the prolonged dwelling upon less scientific and more aesthetic and general significances of things actual may lead, as it led the later French naturalists, into symbolism. Some such results as these are discernible in the later British realistic characterizations. They take the form of a quality distinct from incongruity though often difficult to define, in part, as has just been remarked, merely a rather poetical refinement of the art of portrayal, in part a frank assertion of the super-sensual and metaphysical. This whole effect deserves attention as a tendency in realism evident only in the later novel, though always somewhat native to poetry and romance. This tendency is here called the extra-realistic.

Important in it are, of course, certain of the major influences designated in the preceding chapter—symbolism, the trend of all science toward the metaphysical, as well as the Bergsonian and kindred developments in philosophy. In literature extra-realism has appeared at the end of a materialistic age which has looked upon tangible things until it has seen that they are but sen-

sory aspects of something not tangible, and has conned over and refined its distinctions between this and that until all distinctions have at times vanished in the universal, an age, in short, that infuses acute consciousness of the actual with sense of the mystic.

This study makes no attempt to trace the entrance of extra-realism into late-Victorian realism. Definition and exemplification are the purposes here. As with incongruity, Hardy affords early instances. As critics have long since pointed out, he amplified and exalted realistic characterization by endowing it with a half-philosophical, half-poetical sense of locality and cosmos. His Tess,[19] his Eustacia,[20] his Gabriel Oake[21] quite patently draw life from the grave and stately poetry which Hardy makes of great things and small in nature, hilltops, moonrise, starshine, the stir of the wind in leaves and grass. He does something too in a frankly philosohpical way, attaching to the personalities of *The Well-Beloved,* for example, a certain artificial Platonism. In all, despite his pessimistic naturalism, he produces characterizations in which the actual and the average are distinctly enriched by something not easily named and evaluated. But the significant thing here is not that his power in the poetical treatment of background is elusive, but that he transfers the virtue of his nature description to characters conceived realistically.

The prevalence of this mode of character-portrayal among realists need scarcely be mentioned; as a phase

[19] In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.*

[20] In *The Return of the Native.*

[21] In *Far from the Madding Crowd.*

of local-color realism it has become a commonplace. Miss Sinclair, for instance, in *The Three Sisters,* as if to compensate for the pathology of the sexual in the book, has located the story among the high northern moors, in a region vast and remote, beautiful and strange. The qualities of the moor she carries over into the personalities of her people. In the strained souls of Alice and her father is something of the "horror of the haunted twilights, of nightfall and midnights." Jim Greatorex is as primitive as the hills and the animals upon them, possessed of deep inarticulate sympathy for brutes and growing things, of a great tenderness which is mingled with elements "savage, violent, and repulsive."

Among other results of the realistic venture with poetry and romance is an occasional out-and-out grotesquery. Of this, Mr. Joyce's *Ulysses* is an extreme instance, though *Ulysses,* it must be repeated, is not by strict definition entirely a realistic novel. It does, however, embody that which might in other hands have been sordid, painstaking naturalism, but that which Mr. Joyce fabricates into degenerate silliness, foaming fury, and macabre poetry. There is, for example, that nightmare in which Lynch, Stephen Dedalus, and Leopold Bloom visit the street of "flimsy houses with gaping doors."

Only psychiatrists can discuss the pathological import of this episode. Without disregarding their verdict, the student of literature may well be conscious of dreadful creative energy. Here are pages that whip to life each foulness which the reader has ever dreamed of, known, and forgotten. Here are lines that declare the

bestiality of man and prophesy awfully the ultimate brutalizing of all finer essence in him. Here is created a chaos peopled by monstrous, galvanic animations, spawn of Celtic fancy and great loathing and bitterness of heart. Here the Hamlet mood, which has shown forth again and again in the consciousness of Stephen, becomes bedlamite and fecund in its mania. Then come to being such mopping, mowing, mocking devils as that thing called "Virag." The very dead rise from the grave. Stephen's mother stands before him an offense to eye and nostril, a fearful grotesque of what had been "the beautiful May Goulding," nauseating, pitiable—and more poignantly parental than ever the ghost of Hamlet's father.

"O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on him! Save him from hell, O divine Sacred Heart!" she cries. And "a green crab with malignant red eyes sticks deep its grinning claws in Stephen's heart." Then "Stephen . . . . his head and arms thrown back stark, beats the ground and flees from the room past the whores at the door."

For that moment, at least, Mr. Joyce makes real potency out of the present-day fascination with the ugly and the grotesque, and by so much translates realism into extra-realism.

A somewhat kindred but more extreme enhancement of the actual and the average appears in Mr. Lawrence's Ciccio. Here Mr. Lawrence has, by recourse to the unconscious and to a kind of atavistic paganism and animalism, made a figure of real power out of what might have been depicted as a stupid, indolently passionate

Italian peasant. In the wordless regions of the self (if one may venture to talk Mr. Lawrence's language) Alvina is appropriated by this strange being. His tawny eyes, his pulsing feline pupils glow with the penetrative mindlessness that man sometimes surprises in the eyes of beasts. He emanates a paganism before which Alvina bows "like an ancient sacred prostitute," such paganism as lies almost palpable upon the man's native mountains and becomes part of all who dwell there. Ciccio, at least in the earlier pages of the book, is Mr. Lawrence's "Tiger, tiger, burning bright," or his nearest approach to it. Yet this interesting piece of diabolism appears in a novel indubitably realistic. Under the newer dispensation a realist quite evidently feels free to tear a leaf from either the poet or the romanticist.

An instance of far more delicate and more thoughtful extra-realism in the mode of poetry or romance is Irene Forsyte.[22] Happily Mr. Galsworthy has interpreted her. She is Beauty as it inhabits Woman. She is as much a symbol as she is a marriagable human being. She is the "realization of that truth passing the understanding of a Forsyte pure—that the body of Beauty has a spiritual essence, uncapturable save by a devotion which thinks not of self."[23] There is about her, for all her femininity and the torment to which it is subjected, a delicately grave, impassivity, a hint of myth, of something fit more for the adoration of devotees than for the uses of lovers.

Adhering a bit more closely to traditionally realistic

[22] In *The Forsyte Saga.*

[23] *The Forsyte Saga,* "Preface," p. viii.

tone but not to the older method is the extra-realism which results when the advanced realist plumbs the depths of sensation and perception, driving for the heart of the experience of being alive.

Miss Richardson's *Pilgrimage,* that is to say, her Miriam, is a case in point. One must, however, be on guard here not to confuse the effect of Miss Richardsons' individual method with perception of the metaphysical as it operates in Miriam. One is too apt to find symbolic meanings in the facts of the narrative—if, as is quite probable, he is slow to see any clear fictional purpose in them. But there are in *Pilgrimage* unmistakable instances of penetration below the surface of experience, passages in which Miriam's consciousness of self takes on odd vividness. For example Miriam will suddenly fall to musing upon her hands, holding them up before her and feeling their entities as part of her own personality. "They would be her companions until the end. They would wither. But the bones would not change. The bones would be laid unchanged and wise in the grave."[24] As one reads this he recalls perhaps many odd clairvoyant moments in his own awareness of being, the inspection of his face in a mirror, or the whispered repetition of his own name.

At times this sense of the ego sweeps out so powerfully from Miriam that it attains mastery of other lives in as far as Miriam can perceive them; and then her ego augments its own mystery by the mystery of souls that accompany Miriam on her pilgrimage.

[24] *Backwater,* p. 179.

Miriam looked fearlessly up at the faces that were turned towards her. Again she seemed to see all of them at once. The circle of her vision seemed huge. It was as if the confining rim of her glasses were gone and she saw equally from eyes that seemed to fill her face. She drew all their eyes to her. They were waiting for her to speak. For a moment it seemed as if they stood there lifeless. She had drawn all their meaning and all their happiness into herself. She could do as she wished with them—their poor little lives.[25]

And even as she stands alone in the midst of trivialities, this mystic thing comes upon her overwhelming, transcendent.

She became aware of a curious buoyancy rising within her. It was so strange that she stood still for a moment on the stair. For a second life seemed to cease in her and the staircase to be swept from under her feet. . . . . "I'm alive." . . . . It was as if something had struck her, struck right through her impalpable body, sweeping it away, leaving her there shouting silently without it. I'm alive . . . . I'm alive. Then with a thump her heart went on again and her feet carried her body warm happy and elastic easily up the solid stairs. She tried once or twice deliberately to bring back the breathless moment standing still on a stair. Each time something of it returned. "It's me; this is *me* being alive," she murmured with a feeling under her like the sudden drop of a lift.[26]

For the reader too some of this is *Miriam*—this reaching for dim potent significance, for things metaphysical beyond precise expression, the phantasmic in the solid actual world of every day. All this is part of Miriam's personality.

[25] *Pointed Roofs,* p. 277. Excerpts reprinted by permission of the author.

[26] *Backwater,* p. 110. Excerpts reprinted by permission of the author.

Between *Pilgrimage* and Miss Sinclair's *Mary Olivier* there is a strong resemblance in general method and characterization. Miss Sinclair has given frank development to the theme of the ego, and there clings to Mary more than a hint of the metaphysical. Trying to comprehend reality, happiness, beauty, and God, Mary progresses in part by a study of the German idealists, in part by a series of moments in which she makes contact with things ineffable.

As a "sudden secret happiness," this mood appears in childhood.

> She could never tell when it was coming, nor what it would come from. It had something to do with the trees standing up in the golden white light. It had something to do with a certain white light flooding the fields, flooding the room.[27]

With maturity and the disappointments of life, this experience takes the form of answer to prayer. The element of self-perception in it sharpens and grows steadier as the years pass.

> There was something in you that would go on, whatever happened. . . . . Its happiness was not like the queer, sudden, uncertain ecstasy. She had never known *what* that was. It came and went; it had gone so long ago that she was sure that whatever it had been it would never come again. . . . . But that ecstacy and this happiness had one quality in common; they belonged to some part of you that was free. A you that had no hereditary destiny; that had got out of the net or had never been caught in it. . . . .[28]

And finally, under the drive of Mary's conscience, this trance state enables her to win her mother from death.

[27] P. 93. Copyright 1919 by The Macmillan Company. Excerpts reprinted by permission.

[28] Pp. 311–12.

This was an awful feeling. Dying must be like this. One thing going after another . . . . let everything go except yourself. Hold on to yourself. . . . . But you felt yourself going.

Going and coming back; gathered together; incredibly free; disentangled from the net of nerves and veins.

Then it willed. Your self willed. . . . . Waves and waves of will coming on, making your will, driving through empty time. . . . . God's will in your will. Self of your self. Reality in reality. . . . .[29]

The reader does not, perhaps, long hold in memory the details of these clairvoyant states, but he does retain consciousness of metaphysical or mystic qualities in the personality concerned.

Similar effects in characterization may be seen abundantly in the novels of Mr. Lawrence. To be sure, he has in his *Fantasia* declared with almost ribald scorn against mysticism and kindred vaguenesses; but the book none the less contains a system of metaphysics that was first expressed in the poems and novels. The poems and novels should, in fact, be read first; otherwise one might suspect *The Fantasia* of burlesque. Yet one cannot fail to see that the novels are deadly serious creations of thoroughly realistic intent. One will also see that the novels do beyond question exemplify the principles set forth in *The Fantasia,* and that the characters are symbolic of the strange things affirmed by Mr. Lawrence of the ego.

Mr. Lawrence declares that the basis of life is in the plexuses of the autonomic system. He recognizes a primal, dynamic consciousness that has nothing to do with cognition. Impulses originating in the primitive

[29] P. 351.

consciousness and not, as is commonly supposed, the ideals of the "mental consciousness" are the great driving force of life. The primitive consciousness never expresses itself in thought. The soul, thinks Mr. Lawrence, either "decomposes" after death into some greater psychic "reality," or passes into one or more living individuals. It is from the sun that the soul-stuff comes. The sun is composed of "all the effluence of the dead. But the *quick* of the sun is polarized with the living" by direct connection with their plexuses.

In this plexus-dominated world, Mr. Lawrence finds that the highest goal of man is to realize his own identity. From the moment of conception, man is a new entity, not a fusion of parental elements but something unique and unprecedented. Man, to profit fully by this uniqueness of his, must sternly live down all distracting tendencies. Sex attraction and love need special treatment. "It is time," says he, "to drop the word love, and more than time to drop the ideal of love." Gentleness and forbearance must no longer be desired in any intimate relationship; in their place should be intense antagonism.

The ideal condition of life, according to Mr. Lawrence, probably existed in a great pagan world of which Egypt and Greece were the last trace. This world possessed a common culture, "a vast and perfect science of its own, a science in terms of life. In our era this science crumbled into magic and charlatanry." To restore this culture is Mr. Lawrence's hope.

Perhaps the clearest issue of this purpose in so far as it tends toward extra-realism in characterization may

be seen in *Women in Love*.[30] The women in question are Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen, the one a teacher in the grammar school of her native collier town, the other a sculptor in the modern way, just returned at the opening of the story from her work in London. The action of the novel consists of but little more than the fluctuations, the advances, the retreats, the alacritous surrenders, the agonized revulsions, the alternate and simultaneous orgasmic loving and murderous hating through which these two women come finally to their sexual unions, Ursula with Rupert Birkin, an ultra-intellectual and spiritual-sensualist, and Gudrun with Gerald Crich, who, to repeat what has been said here of him,[31] appears designed to represent the apotheosis of modern intelligent animality in the Nordic race. Ursula and Rupert at last marry. Gudrun, satiated and frankly determined to become the mistress of a sculptor quite as modern as herself, drives Gerald to virtual suicide.

The theme of *Women in Love* is the ego. There are, in the novel, two major ways in which the ego asserts itself: the ego seeks the extremity of physical sensation, for through physical sensation the ego is most acutely conscious of itself; also the ego holds back desperately from any situation in which awareness of another ego or concern for it might be powerful enough to shut out strong consciousness of self as a dominant condition of being. Consequently sexual relations are at once the ego's blessing and bane; for in these relations sensation is vivid, but there is danger that regard for another ego may become paramount. Therefore, at every turn of

[30] Published in 1921.

[31] *Vide supra*, p. 8.

the narrative one is confronted by sex. It appears, for example, in what may be called with reference to *Women in Love,* the minor assertion of the ego, that is, the surging up of impulses from the unconscious.

The characterizations exhibiting this egoism are, whatever else they may or may not be, sufficiently illustrative of the metaphysical super-sensual aspect of extra-realism. This extra-realism pervades the whole portrayal. It is present in the action and in the language both of the characters and of Mr. Lawrence himself when he officiates as impersonal narrator. Says Birkin to Ursula:

> "There is . . . . a final me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility. So there is a final you. And it is there I would meet you, not in the emotional, loving plane—but there beyond, where there is no speech and no term of agreement. There we are two stark, unknown beings, two utterly strange creatures. . . . . It is quite inhuman. . . . One is outside the pale of all that is accepted, and nothing known applies."[32]

Says Mr. Lawrence of Gudrun:

> The world was finished now for her. There was only the inner, individual darkness, sensation within the ego, the obscene religious mystery of ultimate reduction, the mystic frictional activities of diabolic reducing down, disintegrating the vital organic body of life.[33]

Working with colors such as these, Mr. Lawrence can scarcely be expected to produce the more traditional types of characterization.

And in many things undertaken by Mr. Lawrence,

[32] P. 47. By permission of A. and C. Boni, Inc., as are all the brief excerpts from *Women in Love* subsequent.

[33] P. 515.

as, for example, the analysis of things sensual by his method, there is direct need for something more subtle than mere English. Again and again he infers and declares that the true nature of sensation is too mystic for speech. One can with difficulty make any precise statement here, but Mr. Lawrence does seem intent upon something beyond the sensual, something quintessential, super-sensual. Birkin, who serves often as spokesman for Mr. Lawrence, advances the theory that in sensation rather than in consciousness of a more abstract sort lies perfect felicity. He envies the degenerate races of West Africa, who have, he believes, sensations beyond the ken of civilized man. In the contact of grass, of young fir saplings, of the very thistle with his naked body he finds ineffable pleasure. As for the sexual experience—here Mr. Lawrence's thoughts quite break through language beyond any hope of capture. The sensation of coition is: "a mystery the reality of which can never be known, mystic sensual reality that can never be transmitted into mind content, but remains outside, living body of darkness and silence and subtlety, the mystic body of reality."[34]

It is for this "mystic body of reality" that the ego seeks sexuality. After long hesitation and fitful resistance, the ego surrenders with the unconventional suddenness of Gerald and Gudrun.

Equally sudden are the rebellions of the ego against love and passion; and as in the case of the surrender, the unconscious appears to originate the impulse. All the major characters are subject to sudden violent an-

[34] P. 366.

tipathy for the ego that has infatuated them. Perhaps the strangest instance of such a seizure is that of Hermione Roddice, a rival of Ursula for the affection of Birkin. Hermione, in a moment of "dynamic hatred and loathing, coming strong and black out of the unconscious," in a "delirium of pleasure," "a voluptuous ecstacy," lays hand upon a paperweight of lapis lazuli and all but renders Birkin unconscious for eternity.[35]

Clearly, then, these creatures of hyper-egoism are notable for the aura of strangeness that envelops them. To call this quality of their personalities by so matter-of-fact a term as extra-realism is to ask that this designation be interpreted here as Mr. Lawrence might interpret it, super-sensually, metaphysically. In comment upon the people of *Women in Love,* one longs to speak only Mr. Lawrence's language. Interpreting the thought of the sculptor Leorke, Mr. Lawrence says of Gudrun: "Once within the house of her soul and there was a pungent atmosphere of corrosion, an inflamed darkness of sensation, and a vivid, subtle, critical consciousness that saw the world distorted, horrific."[36] Quite so—but extra-realism nevertheless.

These instances of extra-realism in its various phases as it appears in the works of Mr. Lawrence and others are doubtless extreme. They are not offered as typical of the more ordinary manifestations of the quality; they are presented merely as a convenient means of defining this marked aspect of the later British realism. They illustrate what may be viewed as a very natural revolt against the formulas of late-Victorian fiction and the

[35] P. 118. [36] P. 515.

dreary objectivity of naturalism. They do not indicate how extensive or how permanent that reaction may be; and whether they represent progress or retrogression in the art of the novel is no concern of this study. Certainly, though, they do show that English realism is not to be hampered and circumscribed by the objectively actual and by what is traditionally interpreted as the average or normal. Whatever realism covets that is poetic, symbolic, romantic, metaphysical, super-sensual, this it will take and yet remain realism.

CHAPTER IV

THE MORE PICTORIAL ELEMENTS IN RECENT CHARACTERIZATION

I. INTRODUCTORY: THE ELEMENTS BOTH "IMAGEAL" AND "NON-IMAGEAL"

If the evidence in the preceding chapter has not been misinterpreted, extra-realism is yet realism. There is decided confirmation of this view if study be made of details in the characterizations used to instance extra-realism. Actuality is as strongly evident as is the poetic or the romantic, or the metaphysical. Concerning this actuality there is a vast deal to be said even if it be investigated no farther than the point at which the extra-realistic qualities appear; there is also something to be said of the exact manner in which the latter become manifest.

By 1914 Henry James had remarked concerning "the new novel": ". . . . an appetite for closer notation, a sharper specification of the signs of life, of consciousness of the human scene and the human subject in general, than the three or four generations before us had been at all moved to insist on."[1]

Here, in brief, is the text for this and the subsequent chapter—a study of developments in the materials composing realistic characterizations. The important word here is "materials"; a study of the whole technique of character-portrayal, that is, a study of the methods of

[1] *Notes on Novelists*, p. 321.

combining the materials or elements would not add much evidence upon the larger topics for treatment, would in fact obscure the general purpose. There is necessity, however, for a more detailed and more systematically chronological method than was needed in the discussion of incongruity and extra-realism, those larger manifestations of the newer conditions in realism. Now Group II as well as Groups I and III will be drawn upon for evidence, and some recognition of sequence in developments is not only possible but really necessary for adequate definition of the final stage.

For the sake of clarity the materials, called here the "elements" of characterization, have been isolated as far as possible and examined and defined separately. A careful examination of any characterization will show that as far as verbal expression is concerned there are six forms of presenting narrative material: (1) Objective detailing of the character's appearance and action; (2) Character's conversation; (3) Presentation of the character's actual sensation, perceptions, and concepts; (4) Interpretative comment upon the character; (5) Generalized narrative; (6) Objective details of the character's environment.

Before any defense of these designations is attempted, each element must be defined as it appears when not mingled with others. For the first of the list, then, let the reader imagine a sentence which consists of uninterpretative personal description. The second refers to quoted conversation or to reported discourse which preserves the style of the original speaker. The third is very inclusive and much inclined to merge with other

elements; it is in its purest state where it sets forth the actual sequence of a character's thinking—sensations, perceptions, concepts, large and small, simple and complex. The fourth may be delivered by the author as an entity outside of the story, or by one of the characters in the narrative. In the latter case it may be interpreted as including any mode of expression, even gesture and facial appearance. The fifth element is at its purest when it sets forth in a few words an event of considerable magnitude, one which might easily be related in full detail. In a few sentences it may cover several years in a character's life. The sixth details things palpable to sense only; other comments upon environment take the form of other elements.

Upon the printed page these elements appear either separately or in combination; that is, any one passage, sentence, phrase, or word may be an instance of one or more elements. The possibilities of juxtaposition and combination are infinite, and the problem of designating elements in any given passage not infrequently opens the way to endless quibblings and alternations of judgment. Nevertheless, these elements are sufficiently final to serve in the present study. Their most apparent shortcomings are that they fail to provide for epistolary characterization and for what may be called negative characterization, that is, characterization by what the individual does *not* do, say, and think. As a matter of fact, however, the letter as a medium of characterization is not different from dialogue and thought; and negative traits of any importance, if not referred to directly by the author, are at least implied in the positive portrayal.

These elements will be considered primarily with reference to what may be called their permanence—in other words, with reference to their part in the recollection of any given character which comes to the reader after the book has been finished. In a sense this recollected image is a measure of the actuality in the character's portrayal. That the six elements make up the reader's memory of a fictional character and serve as the symbols of personality may be proved if one will summon to recollection Becky Sharp, Adam Bede, Lord Jim, or any other at all. The same experiment will demonstrate that the elements are not of equal value in the recollection.

The justification of this test in the present problem lies with the psychological experimentors who have long used the memory as a measure of perception and attention. Granted that the powers of perception and attention are normal, the test by recollection affords a measure of the significance or vividness of the thing perceived. For the task in hand, too, the great value of this test is that it isolates characterization as far as possible from what are commonly called plot and setting.

From this point of view, then, the elements are obviously of great range of importance. Inasmuch as the average person of literary taste remembers largely by images, it is safe to evaluate the elements according to what may be called their "imageal" power in recollection, that is, of the extent to which the mind is aware of them as images.

The objective detailing of appearance and action is obviously the most imageal of all and the most valuable

in establishing identity. Equally imageal but less employed as a means of establishing identity is the objective detailing of the character's environment. Dialogue may be imageal or non-imageal. One may recall a character, Mrs. Poyser in *Adam Bede,* for example, by auditory reconstruction of certain speeches word for word; or one may remember a character by mental summary of its habits of discourse as one re-creates Captain Marlow in *Lord Jim.* The presentation of the character's actual sensations, perceptions, and concepts is also both imageal and non-imageal both in print and in recollection. Author's comment may be an auditory image if it be recollected as if it were a slogan or aphorism, as in Galsworthy's constant reiteration about the property instinct of Soames Forsyte; it may be, and usually is, non-imageal. The judgments and comments of a character's associates may be imageal, as Mrs. Mount-Stuart's "dainty rogue in porcelain,"[2] or they may be non-imageal, more frequently the latter. Bits of generalized narrative may conceivably be imageal in the purely auditory manner; certainly they are rarely so. Objective details of environment are, of course, purely imageal.

From this it is clear that the least imageal of the elements are generalized narrative, and comment upon a character by the author or by other characters. Generalized narrative is not a large factor in the actuality of present-day realism; hence it will not be discussed here in detail. Interpretative comment also will not be dwelt upon. Interpretative comment by the author, like

[2] In *The Egoist.*

generalized narrative, is not important in recent fictional practice. Interpretative comment offered by one character concerning another is, however, rather abundant, and in the method of James and Conrad has seemingly been expanded to include the whole novel.[3] Nevertheless, character's interpretative comment will not be studied here in detail. When it includes the other elements, as it must if it make up a whole novel, it becomes a method of narration rather than a distinct element, and its study is the study of the way in which elements are combined and toned to one effect. As a distinct element, character's comment has somewhat more actualizing power than has author's comment, but not enough to call for a searching account of its recent developments.

These non-imageal elements, generalized narrative and interpretative comment, cannot, however, be disregarded, for although rarely identifying, they make up an important part of recollected personality. The general function of all this non-imageal stuff is to add background, solidity, in a sense familiarity to the reader's memory of a character. This may be shown by reference to recollection in real life. The memory of one's friend, for instance, may not at any moment be more detailed or more vivid than that of a chance acquaintance; yet it is invested with a sense of greater completeness and it more nearly approximates the effect of actual presence. This condition is due in part to the greater amount of memory-stuff in the fringe of consciousness, material which includes many non-imageal concepts of

[3] *Vide infra,* chap. v, section 3, which is devoted to this topic.

trait or memories of biographical facts. Of just such stuff and just such value is the non-imageal material in fiction. Through it a Thackeray, for example, gossiping as of old friends, artfully coaxing credence, can endow with personality the simplest of types—Amelia, George, Lady Esmond, Major Pendennis—dare one say, Becky herself? At present no Thackerays are writing and imageal material is at a premium, especially in realism where the dramatic ideal of structure predominates, as it does now everywhere. Yet the non-imageal elements cannot disappear from use. In even so thoroughly scenic a novel as Frank Swinnerton's *Nocturne*,[4] for example, they serve a surprisingly important function in those parts of the first chapter which are almost exclusively devoted to characterization. In fact, this use of them in the earlier stages of a characterization is perhaps the way in which they do most to establish personality in the recent novel.

There is yet one other general fact of importance concerning non-imageal material; it is constantly augmented through the operation of time and forgetfulness, by virtue of which things imageal in the book fade and condense into the non-imageal of recollection; the reader, so to speak, becomes his own Thackeray and generalizes for himself. This is particularly important in estimating the value of the elements in the objective "slice of life" novels of Group II, such as Arnold Bennett's *The Old Wives' Tale*[5] and W. S. Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*.[6] The character of Constance in the former is

[4] Published in 1917.

[5] Published in 1908. [6] Published in 1915.

a case in point. She is entirely a type, not particularized in any way, real largely because of the absolute authenticity with which her daily life is reproduced. One picks up each commonplace, fully detailed event and intensifies its actuality by adding to it a sense of such things happening endlessly to all the commonplace women of his acquaintance. Then one forgets it all. Yet, in recollection, Constance does not lose actuality; she is as real and important as one's own aunt, although scarcely a dozen of the undistinguished facts of her life linger in memory. These details have all merged into non-imageal concepts, her shop-keeping, her married life, her love of her son, general all, but somehow full of uncommon vitality.

A part of this vitality may be due to repetition, for the actuality of Constance has been so reiterated scene after scene that the reader comes to believe in her somewhat as he believes in Robin Hood or Don Quixote or any other person never present to sense but thought about from childhood. In greater part, however, vitality is due to the imageal implicit in the non-individual: it is the appeal to one's very belief in the reality of daily life, in arising and eating and laboring and lying down to sleep; and it is the potency of like things done by all one's race in the past, things traditional, old wives' tales, faint stirrings "felt along the heart." In other words, to estimate the permanence of imageal elements in a circumstantial novel of commonplace life is to estimate not so much their vividness or uniqueness as their uniformity and universality, the ease with which they pack into and survive unconsciously in the non-imageal

form of thought. Perhaps, after all, this is merely to say that in characters from such fiction the non-imageal background elements are of prime importance; the picture is sure to become in recollection pretty much all background.

Upon the foregoing basis, that is, upon study of the elements of characterization exclusive of the two elements last mentioned, the extension of actuality is now to be considered.

2. DETAILS OF BACKGROUND IN CHARACTERIZATION

Of the imageal elements of characterization, objective detailing of environment is one of the most difficult to discuss. The tendency is to overrate it as an agent of actuality. This is due to the fact that since George Eliot and Meredith the clearest force in English fiction has been French naturalism with its exaltation of milieu and its insistence upon detailed scene. Yet, in truth, relatively little of the description of setting in the realistic novel survives as imageal material in our recollection of the characters; it tends to fade into non-imageal conclusions as to environment or, what is more important, becomes an emotional aura inseparable from the reader's recollection of a character and contributing largely to its power and significance. This latter effect may occasionally be strong enough in itself to identify the character.

In general, it is true, description of setting or environment has grown more important in characterization since George Eliot, but this point must not be urged too strongly. George Eliot in her earlier work, knew the

value of a local habitation for her characters. Readers will be found in plenty who cannot think of Adam Bede[7] without images of hammer, nails, and timber; or of Maggie Tulliver[8] without visions of Dorlcote Mill. In the later novels despite efforts always conscientious, and in *Romola* heroic, scene becomes less and less part of characterization. Never, early or late, did she achieve the emotional enhancement of personality by description of background. In comment upon Meredith, one must be cautious. He produced masterly and memorable passages of description particularly in the earlier novels; he elaborated in his poetry a metaphysics distinctly based on nature. Yet there is no certainty that recollection of Richard Feverel[9] or Harry Richmond[10] or Diana Merion[11] or Clara Middleton,[12] Matey Weyburn,[13] or Nevill Beauchamp[14] will carry images of environment or sense of power emanating therefrom.

With Hardy there is, of course, no doubt. In him the naturalistic faith in milieu as an element in characterization has adequate literary expression. To recollect Eustacia or Clym is to see, hear, and smell Egdon Heath[15] and to feel the presence of something vast, inscrutable, and omnipotent. To recollect Tess is to expe-

[7] In *Adam Bede.*

[8] In *The Mill on the Floss.*

[9] In *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel.*

[10] In *The Adventures of Harry Richmond.*

[11] In *Diana of the Crossways.*

[12] In *The Egoist.*

[13] In *Lord Ormont and His Aminta.*

[14] In *Beauchamp's Career.*

[15] In *The Return of the Native.*

rience, though in less unqualified form and with less certainty as to its origin, almost the same emotion as associates itself with Eustacia. It has come, one may hazard, not from Hardy's incidental arraignments of God, not from his rather obvious manipulation of Clare and Alex D'Urberville or from the misplaced letter, but rather from the records of those moments when Tess, close to the earth, part of it, becomes a thing ennobled, beyond pity, beyond all personal concern.

In general, the voluminous and detailed realism of the biographical novels of Group II is, as was suggested,[16] but indirectly serviceable in characterization. There is a possible exception in the earlier work of Mr. H. G. Wells. Here the realism is pointed and rendered memorable by particularly insistent social satire, by an unremitting attack upon the "muddleheadedness" of English life. Readers much wrought upon by this will perhaps find themselves unable to think of Hoopdriver,[17] Polly,[18] and Kipps,[19] without envisaging also certain details of school and shop which most effectively represent the general "muzziness" of social conditions. In fact, readers especially susceptible to that representation which merges into symbolism may find that details of scene play a large part in such recollections as survive at all of the Marys[20] and Stephens[21] and Margarets[22] of Mr. Wells's later novels.[23]

[16] *Vide supra*, pp. 99–101.

[17] In *Wheels of Chance*.

[18] In *The History of Mr. Polly*.

[19] In *Kipps*.

[20] In *The Passionate Friends*.

[21] *Ibid*.

[22] In *The New Machievelli*.

[23] See Lucy I. Chandler, *H. G. Wells, A Study of Literary Phases and Forms*, pp. 28–31.

The mention of symbolism in background details will, of course, impel one to consider its place in recollection of Mr. Galsworthy's characters. But the truth is that general comment upon Mr. Galsworthy has confused representation with symbolism. Strictly speaking, Timothy's house[24] with its Victorian bric-a-brac is representative, typifying the upper middle class of its day, part and parcel of the very lives of Timothy, Ann, Juley, and Hester, and inseparable from their memories; in no small way insuring them, as Mr. Galsworthy says, "a little life hereafter, a little balm in the hurried Gilead of a dissolving progress."[25] The house at Robin Hill,[26] however, is consciously or unconsciously on Mr. Galsworthy's part, truly symbolic; it is capable of a dozen interpretations all of which will unite in the word "beauty." Forsytes with their property instinct come and go; and by their response to the house at Robin Hill, their souls are measured. Upon beauty itself they have no great effect; the house stands when they have all passed, for sale or "to let," imperishable, ready to allow who knows what new generations to show themselves forth in its presence. "Timothy's" and the house at Robin Hill thus not merely point the difference between representation and symbolism but exemplify the manner in which details of setting have been wrought into characterization by a recent novelist who has elaborately refined his method, yet who has been just as conscious as has Mr. Wells or Mr. Bennett of the external marks of period and class.

[24] In *The Forsyte Saga.*

[25] *Ibid.*, "Preface," p. ix. [26] *Ibid.*

An examination of Group III shows that only the method of Miss Richardson involves real contribution to the use of background in characterization. Miss Sinclair and Mr. Lawrence, to be sure, are masters of descriptive writing and exhibit more than ordinary skill in the enhancement of a personality thereby, as has been noted in *The Three Sisters,* in *The Lost Girl,* and in *Women in Love;* but it may scarcely be said that description of background is an inevitable element in recollection of their characters. With Miss Richardson the reverse is true; Miriam, equivocal as she is in traits, scarcely exists except in the reader's recollection of scene. If it were not for the sheer vividness of the experiences shared with her, one would not be entitled to say that she exists at all as a personality; for unlike Mr. Bennett's Constance, she is not supremely typical and simple, and in consequence the abundant imageal material connected with her does not survive in any large non-imageal concepts except that which may vaguely be called the concept of actuality.

In all, then, objective detailing of a character's environment or background tends in present-day realism to find its ultimate value in the non-imageal—a condition furthered by the development of the social consciousness, by the growing importance of suggestion and symbolism, and by the psychologizing habit among recent realists.

3. DETAILS OF APPEARANCE AND ACTION

The detailing of action and appearance is clearly the most characterizing of all the elements. By nature im-

ageal, it tends to remain imageal in the reader's recollection of a character and thus to furnish the symbols of personality, of identity itself. It is, so to speak, the most condensed of the elements, for not only may it in a phrase identify unequivocally but it may in the same moment be broadly universal. Its general development since George Eliot has been toward greater minuteness of specification and toward greater amplitude of suggestion, that is, toward a fuller employment of its capacities.

Summary of George Eliot's characters will show a considerable variation in her dependence upon personal description. There is, for example, a small group of persons such as Arthur Donnithorne[27] or Sir James Chettam,[28] who are depicted briefly and in only the vaguest and most typical terms. At the other extreme is a small group who are described at scarcely greater length but who are sharply identified by peculiarities of appearance or manner—Caleb Garth's[29] movements of the fingers while in thought, old Mr. Featherstone's[30] dragging of his wig over his ears. Still another group consists of persons more amply described chiefly by material of a general sort but individualized by one or more details—Maggie's[31] toss of the head, Tito's[32] smile. In contrast with these groups are the greater number of Eliot's portrayals—full-length pictures made up of details significant but typically significant, adequate enough symbols to which a sense of personality may at-

[27] In *Adam Bede.*
[28] In *Middlemarch.*
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] In *Mill on the Floss.*
[32] In *Romola.*

tach itself but not in themselves marks of identity. Thus Adam Bede[33] is completely visualized at first appearance—stature, arms, hands, hair, cap, eyes, features, all presented as he labors in his carpenter shop; or Dorothea Brooke, after a few vague glimpses, is first given a complete depiction in the nineteenth chapter of *Middlemarch*. The average quality of these longer descriptions is that of the following:

> The only spot of bright color in the room was made by the hair of a tall maiden of seventeen or eighteen, who was standing before a carved *leggio* or reading desk, such as is often seen in the choirs of Italian churches. The hair was of reddish gold color enriched by an unbroken small ripple such as may be seen in the sunset clouds on grandest autumnal evenings. It was confined by a black fillet above her small ears, from which it rippled forward again and made a natural veil for her neck above her square-cut gown of black *rascia* or serge. Her eyes were bent on a large volume placed before her: one long white hand rested on the reading-desk, and the other clasped the back of her father's chair.[34]

Incidental description, stage direction for dialogue, George Eliot manages in workmanlike manner, carefully consistent as to trait, faithfully recording the traditional physical expression of moods. The general effect is that of truth to life without undue obviousness, but details of action in themselves rarely supplement the dialogue powerfully.

A more literary, a far more artistic use of personal description appears in Meredith's novels, but his indifference to externals as marks of individuality kept him from experimenting largely with the vividly direct and actual.

[33] In *Adam Bede*.

[34] *Romola*, p. 44.

His theories as to description, its use and value, he occasionally sets forth succinctly. Diana says in a letter to her confidante:

"The art of the pen (we write in darkness) is to rouse the inward vision instead of labouring with a drop-scene brush, as if it were to the eye; because our flying minds cannot contain a protracted description. That is why the poets, who spring imagination with a word or a phrase, paint lasting pictures."[35]

And in the prelude to *The Egoist* Meredith formally declares that he will not have "recourse to the small circular glow of the watchmaker's eye to raise in bright relief minutest grains of evidence for the routing of incredulity."[36]

In practice he tends to follow the precepts of Diana's letter, yet occasionally finds it necessary to paint full-length portraits, such as that of Dr. Shrapnell,[37] or to indulge in a whimsy of the most minute particulars, as in that rather well known description of the tiny "irreclaimable curls" on the nape of Clara's neck.[38] Vernon Whitford, however, in the first sixty-seven pages of *The Egoist* is but twice described, once as "Apollo turned fasting friar . . . . a lean, long-walker and scholar . . . ." with a "sunken brillliance,"[39] once by "a level scrutiny of deepest eyes unpleasantly penetrating."[40] Nowhere in the book is his appearance more individualized. Sir Willoughby is even more generally pictured—gestures, expressions of countenance, attitudes, nothing approach-

[35] *Diana of the Crossways*, p. 170. Excerpts reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

[36] I, 1.

[37] In *Beauchamp's Career.*

[38] *The Egoist*, I, 101.

[39] I, 11.

[40] I, 55.

ing particularity. Whitford may be selected as the more representative of Meredith's usual procedure in portraiture. Of incidental description in dialogue Meredith is sparing; whole pages in *The Egoist,* for example, are absolutely unbroken conversation. When the stage directions do come they are by no means so inobvious as George Eliot's, for they are emphasized by rarity and made arresting by style.

> Clara dropped her eyelids for the wave to pass over.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Dr. Middleton balanced himself with an air of benevolent slyness. . . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Clara communicated as much as she was able by one of those looks of still depth which say, Think! and without causing a thought to stir take us into the pellucid mind.[41]

In all, Meredith's use of personal description resembles George Eliot's in its lack of a sharply individualizing quality but differs from it distinctly by virtue of a greater provocativeness and suggestibility.

Hardy with his naturalistic bent contributes to personal description a particularity unknown to Eliot and Meredith, although it must be admitted that his work ranges astonishingly in the opposite direction even to the most perfunctory generality, as:

> Her companion, also in black, appeared as a well-formed young woman about eighteen, completely possessed of that ephemeral precious essence youth, which is itself beauty, irrespective of complexion or contour.[42]

[41] II, 244–45. By permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

[42] *The Mayor of Casterbridge,* p. 21.

Quite the reverse of this is the oft-cited description of Tess, which serves excellently as evidence of Hardy's naturalistic bent for detail.[43] We see Tess aroused from sleep, yawning and stretching. Our attention is called to the redness of her mouth, to the texture of the skin on a lifted arm, to its sunburn, to signs of recent slumber on cheek and eyelid. And equally precise but more poetical are such striking passages as that in which Eustacia gave way to merriment "with a laugh that unclosed her lips so that the sun shone into her mouth as with a tulip and lent it a similar scarlet fire."[44]

The bulk of Hardy's description of persons is midway between the two extremes just illustrated. Used incidentally with dialogue, it resembles George Eliot's except for flashes of poetry—and cheap theatricality. As an agent of identification (if one can for a moment set aside style) it resembles Meredith's; it does not in itself people the mind with visual images of personality. It differs from both Eliot's and Meredith's in the tendency toward naturalistic detail.

In strong contrast to the uneven quality of Hardy's personal description is the unvarying steadiness of this element in Henry James's later characterizations. Here is a unique achievement: the imageal recorded as the imageal yet even in the recording reduced to the non-imageal, so that as one reads there emerges not so much a portrait as a more or less definite series of abstract conceptions and judgments having to do with personality. This condition is produced by the close blending of

[43] *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* p. 191.

[44] *The Native,* p. 108. By permission of Harper and Brothers.

descriptive material with interpretative comment and generalized narrative—a complex not unlike that of the more orderly forms of recollection in real life. Thus we first see Chad as his mother's ambassador finds him:

> Chad was brown and thick and strong, and, of old, Chad had been rough. Was all the difference therefore that he was actually smooth? Possibly; for that he *was* smooth was as marked as in the taste of a saucer or the rub of a hand. The effect of it was general—it had retouched his eyes and settled his color and polished his fine square teeth—the main ornament of his face; and at the same time it had given him a form and a surface, almost a design, it had toned his voice, established his accent, encouraged his smile to more play and his other motions to less. He had formerly, with a great deal of action, expressed very little; and he now expressed whatever was necessary with almost none at all. It was as if, in short, he had really, copious perhaps but shapeless, been put into a form mold and turned successfully out.[45]

You will take away from this no clear, first-hand visual memory of Chad, rather the recollection of another man's well-systematized recollection—and thereby a definitely centered impression of personality, carefully subdued to its function in the whole composition. The effect is secured, not by dependence upon the essential quality in the objective details of the sketch as that quality would strike any intelligent observer, but as it impresses Strether under the conditions of the moment. If this sense of the momentary and the immediate in Strether's experience were intensified, if the man's thought-processes were rendered in the vagueness of truth to life and not in the coherent blend of a literary

[45] *The Ambassador,* p. 104. Excerpts reprinted here and subsequently by permission of the publisher, Harper and Brothers.

style, there would be high actuality in the description of Chad despite its subordination of the imageal; but such extreme actuality James did not seek.

To vividness and precision in personal description, James contributed little except by the way of concentration and economy. Exactness was developed by writers more under the naturalistic influence and more inclined to liberality in use of details. Mr. Arnold Bennett exhibits it in varying degrees and tones of expression, at times with dreary matter-of-factness:

He had deep black eyes, and black hair, like Hilda's; good, regular teeth, and clear complexion; perhaps his nose was rather large, but it was straight. With his large pale hands he occasionally stroked his long soft moustache; the chin was blue. He was smartly dressed in dark blue. He had a beautiful necktie, and the genuine whiteness of his wristband was remarkable in a district where starched linen was either gray or bluish.[46]

At times with a sharp objective poignancy especially in the description marking the advance of age:

She knew that he was old; she said herself that he must be very old, well over seventy. But she had not pictured him. This face on the bed was painfully, pitiably old. A withered face with the shiny skin all drawn into wrinkles! The stretched skin under the jaw was like the skin of a plucked fowl. The cheek-bones stood up and below them were deep hollows, almost like egg-cups. A short, scraggy white beard covered the lower part of his face. The hair was scanty, irregular, and quite white; a little white hair grew in the ears. The shut mouth obviously hid toothless gums, for the lips were sucked in. The eyelids were as if pasted down

[46] *Hilda Lessways*, p. 33. Copyright 1911 by George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

over the eyes, fitting them like kid. All the skin was extremely pallid; it seemed brittle. The body, whose outline was clear under the sheet, was very small, thin, shrunk, pitiable as the face.[47]

From the sifting and sorting of such masses of material the conscientious craftsman has learned that details may be chosen and so phrased as to establish identity by visual means without smothering the reader's imagination. This selection and phrasing Mr. Bennett himself practices in many of his descriptions as does Mr. Wells and, more effectively, Mr. Galsworthy. The latter in *The Forsyte Saga,* for example, although he is as thoroughly convinced as ever were George Eliot and Meredith of the value of definite theme and distinct consistency in trait, yet accomplishes individualization; the property instinct, the Forsyte nature, pervades every reference to the bearers of that name, but no reader will in recollection confuse Jolyon with James or Swithin, or Aunt Ann with Aunt Juley. In these distinctions the visual images help and at the same time body forth the varieties of Forsyticism—James's stoop, Swithin's chest, Soames's sniff, June's hair, Aunt Ann's banded curls, which "had extinguished in the family all sense of time." Rarely more than a sentence or two is needed to present the salient features. Here is one of the longer descriptions, Bosinney upon first appearance:

. . . . Of medium height and strong build with a pale, brown face, a dust coloured moustache very prominent cheek-bones and hollow cheeks. His forehead sloped back towards the crown

[47] *The Old Wives' Tale,* p. 571. Copyright 1911 by George H. Doran Company, Publishers. Excerpts reprinted by permission of George H. Doran Company.

of his head and bulged out in bumps over the eyes, like foreheads seen in the lion-house at the Zoo. He had sherry-coloured eyes, disconcertingly inattentive at times.[48]

Very often to the innate justness of the detail is added the power of discerning comment.

The spidery fingers of her hands pressed against each other and interlaced, as though she were subtly recharging her will.[49]

The justness or aptness of Mr. Galsworthy's detail when he is depicting extra-realism in character produces, at times, true symbolism. The clove carnation and the jessamine bloom worn by the women in *The Dark Flower* are clearly symbolic; of somewhat similar quality are the feminine costumes described in this novel. There is also much detail that is half symbolic, half typical—Anna Stormer's odd cheek bones and Cramier's bestial neck, for example. The tendency of critical comment seems to be to call all such material symbolic—if Mr. Galsworthy produces it.

With the playwright's instinct for gesture Mr. Galsworthy has provided at the crises action which stoutly supplements dialogue—Irene's dumb, shrinking eyes, "dark with a sort of fascinated fright"; her hands shielding her face or writhing at her breast, as Soames attempts to regain her favor with the diamond necklace.[50] Mr. Galsworthy will risk even a distinct theatricality—if such appears to him the truth of things. So he ends *The Man of Property:*

[48] *The Forsyte Saga,* p. 8. By permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

[49] *Ibid.,* p. 10.

[50] *Ibid.,* p. 453.

Young Jolyon's glance shot past him into the hall, and Soames turned. There in the drawing-room doorway stood Irene, her eyes were wild and eager, her lips were parted, her hands outstretched. In the sight of both men that light vanished from her face; her hands dropped to their sides; she stood like stone.

Soames spun round, and met his visitor's eyes, and at the look he saw in them a sound like a snarl escaped him. He drew his lips back in the ghost of a smile.

"This is my house," he said; "I manage my own affairs. I've told you once—I tell you again: we are not at home."

And in Young Jolyon's face he slammed the door.[51]

In general, Mr. Galsworthy's method of using personal description is thoroughly representative of that present-day realism which follows but improves the form of older tradition in characterization. After a brief depiction of salient features as the character exhibits them upon one definite occasion, there is constant mention, sometimes precise and direct, sometimes allusive or figurative, of the more individualizing details of appearance and manner. This is substantially George Eliot's method at her best. Aside from the extra-realism in certain of Mr. Galsworthy's depictions, the largest difference between George Eliot and Mr. Galsworthy is in the latter's sharper consciousness of the social or professional type, of heredity, of all the *actual* conditions of life. Thus, George Eliot, knowing by tradition that deceivers smile, constantly directs the reader's attention toward Tito's lips; and perceiving that Deronda needs humanizing, provides him with a striking somewhat forensic presence and a habit of tugging at his coat lapels. Mr. Galsworthy, on the other hand, to objectify

[51] By permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Soames Forsyte gives him the urban lawyer's clean-shaven immaculacy, the Forsyte chin, a peculiarly individual superciliousness of mouth and nose, and a baffled look in the eye, linking the latter directly to the same expression in his father's eyes and intensifying it as Soames grows older.

In the revelation of universal truth Tito and Deronda may perhaps be entirely as adequate as Soames; but in appeal to the universals through the concepts of daily life, in imageal identity, and sense of personality, there is no question that Mr. Galsworthy's creation is superior. Closer, one may say larger, actuality, sharper identity, sum up the development in personal description from Eliot to Mr. Galsworthy.

Greater precision of identifying details but with distinctly less amplitude of suggestion than achieved by Mr. Galsworthy makes up Miss Sinclair's contribution to personal description. She is particularly adept at faces, displaying real ingenuity in the analysis of expression. At times she selects and shapes her material to one dominant purpose, as in this description of Anne Severn:

> Anne's face and body had the same forward springing look. In their very stillness they somehow suggested movement. Her young breasts sprang forward, sharp pointed. Her eyes had no sliding corner glances. He was forever aware of Anne's face turning on its white neck to look at him straight and full, her black-brown eyes shining and darkening and shining under the black brushes of her eyebrows. Even her nose expressed movement, a sort of rhythm. It rose in a slender arch, raked straight forward, dipped delicately and rose again in a delicately questing tilt. This tilt had the delightful air of catching up and shortening the curl

of her upper lip. The exquisite lower one sprang forward, sharp and salient from the little dent above her innocent, rounded chin. Its edge curled slightly forward in a line firm as ivory and fine as the edge of a flower.[51a]

She uses occasionally very intimate detail:

. . . . He began to notice things about her that he had not noticed before, the shape and color of her finger nails, the modeling of her supple wrists, the way her ears were curved and laid close to her rather broad head. He saw that her skin was milk-white at the throat, and honey-white at her ears, and green-white, the white of an alderflower, at the roots of her red hair.[52]

In the reader's recollection these minute images do not survive; unless they have been centralized and insisted upon as in *The Three Sisters,* where a family resemblance is analyzed with a particularity unsought by Mr. Galsworthy. The chief contribution of Miss Sinclair's personalizing detail is in most of her work on the side of actuality—a general sense of having looked closely, very closely at individuals and having failed to find their traits emblazoned on their faces, even as in life itself.

More radical instances of the same lack of center in trait or typicality might easily be found in Mr. Lawrence's depictions, although the incongruity noted in his characterizations is more traceable to other sources. The most striking and original matters in his personal descriptions are really stylistic, unusual interpretations or figurative rendering of detail:

[51a] *Anne Severn and the Fieldings,* p. 63. Copyright 1922 by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

[52] *The Three Sisters,* p. 241. Copyright 1915 by The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission.

His gleaming beauty, maleness, like a young, good-humored, smiling wolf.[53]

Her long pale face . . . . seemed almost drugged as if a strong mass of thoughts coiled in the darkness within her, and she was never allowed to escape.[54]

Oh, and the beauty of the subjection of his loins, white and dimly luminous as he climbed on the side of the boat, made her want to die, to die. The beauty of his dim and luminous loins as he climbed into the boat, his back rounded and soft—ah, this was too much for her, too final a vision.[55]

Mr. Lawrence has really no great concern for the objective side of personality and contributes nothing new to its presentation.

It is Miss Richardson who has experimented most freely with actuality in personal description. Adherence to her general method is productive of unusual results. It excludes direct mention of the significance, of traits, even of the name of an individual unless these details are near the center of consciousness; it presents of the imageal details only those which occupy that central position under the given conditions; and it plays upon all things great and small the same clarity of illumination, a clarity intensified frequently by the flash of whimsical penetrative divination. This method may produce a full-length portrait in quite the conventional order of first the general, then the particular, finally the significant.

Miriam looked leisurely at the man walking at her side along the grass-covered cliff; his well-knit frame, his well-cut blue serge,

[53] *Women in Love,* p. 15. Excerpts by permission of A. and C. Boni, Inc.

[54] *Ibid.,* p. 16. [55] *Ibid.,* p. 206.

the trimness of collar and tie, his faintly blunted regular features, clean ruddy skin and clear expressionless German blue eyes.[56]

Or the striking details only may emerge in the actual order of perception, yet blocking out the general picture clearly enough.

. . . . An eager face was turned toward her from a thicket of dull wavy hair. She gazed vaguely. The small slippered feet planted firmly high up against the lintel, the sweep of the red dressing gown, the black patch of the Mudie book with its yellow label, the small ringed hand upon it, the outflung arm and hand, the little wreath of smoke about the end of the freshly lit cigarette, the cup of coffee on the little table under the lamp. . . . .[57]

Or there may be no hint of attitude:

Glancing she met a pair of swiftly calculating eyes fixed full on her face. There was frizzy black hair lifted back from an anxious, yellowish, pre-occupied little face. Under the face came the high collar-band of the tightly-fitting dark claret-coloured ribbed silk bodice, fastened from the neck to the end of the pointed peak by a row of small round German buttons, closely decorated with a gilded pattern.[58]

Occasionally Miriam gropes for significances while her eyes and ears record evidence, but more frequently her mind settles instantly upon a few, a very few details of real meaning or of startling truth and exactness:

. . . . A fair florid troubled fickle smiling man in a Norfolk tweed and pale blue tie.[59]

Next to her was the faint glare of Elsa Speier's silent sallowness. Her clear-threaded nimbus of pallid hair was the lowest in the range of figures across the table. She darted quick glances at

[56] *Backwater,* p. 221. By permission of the author.

[57] *The Tunnel,* p. 93. By permission of the author, as are all the subsequent brief excerpts from Miss Richardson's *Pilgrimage.*

[58] *Ibid.,* p. 121. [59] *Ibid.,* p. 133.

one and another without moving her head, and Miriam felt that her pale eyes fully met would be cunning and malicious.[60]

That was Gladstone . . . . with large moist silky eyes like a dog and pointed collars seeing things as they were and going to change them. . . . .[61]

In the hard clear light Miriam saw that the teeth that looked so gleaming and strong in the distance were slightly ribbed and fluted and had serrated edges. Large stoppings showed like shadows behind the thin shells of the upper front ones.[62]

She was sitting as usual very solid and upright in her chair, with her long cheeks pink flushed and her fine nose white and cool and twitching, her yellow hair standing strongly back from her large white brow.[63]

Where Miss Richardson's personal descriptions are strictly faithful to the shifting of Miriam's attention there occurs many times that sense of incongruity noted heretofore—the incongruity of actuality. For example, the details in the last of the foregoing excerpts have this quality: *solid upright* figure; *long flushed* cheeks; *fine, white, cool, twitching* nose do not somehow carry one single meaning; yet they constitute what may well be parts of a photographic portrait. Contrast such details as these with those assigned to Soames Forsyte and note how carefully Mr. Galsworthy has evoked and commingled the reader's stock concepts of social and professional types; the details all do have a single meaning. Miss Richardson appears never to seek typicality and records it only when it thrusts itself upon her. Thus she seems intent upon the sharp identification or individualization of her people.

[60] *Pointed Roofs*, p. 42.

[61] *Backwater*, p. 82.

[62] *Pointed Roofs*, p. 148.

[63] *Backwater*, p. 82.

As a matter of fact she seeks only that degree of identification which exists in actual life in so far as she can secure it by her chosen method. Despite the limitations of this method with its resolute suppression of the large vague enveloping concepts by virtue of which one usually knows where he is and who his companions are, despite this limitation Miss Richardson comes as near as any of her English contemporaries to sheer actuality in details of appearance and action. Toward this effect has personal description clearly tended since the day of George Eliot.

4. SUMMARY

The full degree of actuality in the later realism is thus patent in the frankly imageal material of description especially of the personal sort. Detail has become exact, intimate, unconventional. Also, in gaining precision and identifying power, it has gained suggestibility; its actuality has become highly meaningful.

CHAPTER V

THE LESS IMAGEAL ELEMENTS

I. DIALOGUE

Dialogue and the setting forth of "mind-stuff" have clearly somewhat similar functions in character-portrayal. But the value of dialogue in the reader's recollection of fictional characters differs from that of the subjective element by virtue of greater imageal value; for dialogue possesses both an auditory and visual nature. It resembles the subjective element in its richness of content and its ability to enhance by a strong sense of actuality. It has developed markedly in the last-named quality.

In the novels of Eliot there is always evident the purpose of utilizing every value of dialogue in characterization. Her individuals that are distinctly peculiar in speech exist in the reader's recollection largely by virtue of their conversation—Bartle Massey[1] continually repeats; Mr. Brooke[2] chatters with perspicacious incoherence; Mrs. Poyser[3] crisply delivers the homely aphorism. And an inspection of any major character in George Eliot's works will show that by its own words it has demonstrated its possession of the traits to which the author has conscientiously called the reader's attention. These two devices, self-revelation and the use of habitual forms of speech, George Eliot occasionally unites, possibly with most success in Adam Bede.

[1] In *Adam Bede.* [2] In *Middlemarch.* [3] In *Adam Bede.*

Less successfully does she manage the dialogue of characters who possess no conversational mannerisms. Her besetting fault is, then, a sort of bookishness, a prim shapeliness that accomplishes disbelief. Ardent, conscientious Dorothea would not have uttered a sentence like this in the confusion of first hearing another voice her secret criticism of Casaubon: "I wonder it does not affect you more painfully, if you really think that a man like Mr. Casaubon, of so much goodness, power, and learning, should in any way fail in what has been the labor of his best years."[4]

Nor would Maggie have discoursed with the slightly oratorical rotundity marking her last interview with Stephen Guest. ". . . . I must not, cannot seek my own happiness by sacrificing others. Love is natural, but surely pity and faithfulness and memory are natural too. And they would live in me still and punish me if I did not obey them. . . . ."[5]

Dialogue in the novels of Meredith comes in general just as close to actuality as it does in George Eliot's works, but no closer. The reason for this is not the same as with George Eliot. Meredith's style gives to every phase of his work a literary quality which excuses his dialogue from absolute fidelity to life, operating with reference to actuality in somewhat the same manner as do the meter and diction of verse. That is to say, in *The Egoist,* for example, one scarcely expects the tone and accent of daily conversation any more than in a blank verse drama; one expects merely a representation of realities in the chosen medium of expression. George

[4] *Middlemarch,* I, 200. [5] *The Mill on the Floss,* p. 417.

Eliot, unfortunately, is not so to be pardoned for lapses from actuality.

This stylistic quality of Meredith is much more noticeable in his later works, where lady and gentleman, soldier, lawyer, man, boy, maid, and servitor all show in varying degrees the same penchant for ellipses and figures of speech. Says Colonel DeCray, for example, of a drunken coachman, "He puddles his poor nose. 'Tis mere unction to the exile. Sober struggles below. He drinks to rock his heart because he has one."[6] In the earlier novels before Meredith's style had crystallized, there is only so much of the literary cast as gives piquancy and renders memorable such persons as Mrs. Berry, that lineal descendant of Juliet's nurse and Sary Gamp: ". . . . everybody should eat! It's their sacred duty, no matter what their feelings be! and I say it who'm no chicken! I'll frickashee this—which is a chicken against your return."[7] Or such aphoristic irony as makes Adrian[8] everlasting, or such staccato allusiveness as puts the very life into Richmond Roy.[9] In the later novels, dialogue, though it is abundant, amazingly brilliant, and important in emphasizing traits, is rarely an identifying element. Only occasionally, as in Dr. Middleton,[10] who is most himself in a certain whimsical, archaic stateliness of discourse, does it survive in the

[6] *The Egoist,* I, 205.

[7] *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel,* p. 264. By permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] In *The Adventures of Harry Richmond.*

[10] In *The Egoist.*

reader's recollection as the dominant external mark of a personality.

There is in Meredith, however, a notable advance in what might be called the conversational aspect of dialogue. The interplaying wit, the close-packed aphorism, the allusion by single phrase or word, the ellipsis in clauses, are obviously not such as humanity can normally compass, but they are a sort of glorification of the give-and-take of actual converse among the more intelligent. Even the longer speeches rarely fall into the forensic rhythms of George Eliot.

A less easily defensible tendency toward the literary in dialogue appears in Hardy. This adverse criticism does not apply to his use of dialect, of course, where he has somehow caught the unmistakable tone of rustic talk in the Elizabethan drama. It applies to the dialogue of his major characters, where he appears occasionally to forget that he has elected to tell his tale in the prose of the modern realistic novel. So Clym arraigns Eustacia:

"Can you read, madam? Look at this envelope. Doubtless we shall find more soon, and what was inside them. I shall no doubt be gratified by learning in good time what a well-finished and full-blown adept at a certain trade my lady is."

"Do you say it to me—do you?" She gasped.

. . . . . .

"Do you brave me? Do you stand me out, mistress? Answer. Don't look at me with those eyes as if you would bewitch me again. Sooner than that I die. You refuse to answer?"

"I would not tell you after this, if I were as innocent as the sweetest babe in heaven!"[11]

[11] *The Return of the Native,* pp. 407–8. By permission of the publishers, Harper and Brothers.

It can scarcely be said that Hardy's dialogue has greatly affected the technique of English realism.

The conversational tendency noted in Meredith was carried farther by Henry James, although with scarcely a closer approach to actuality than was sought by Meredith. James employed dialogue to set forth and illumine the facts of his narrative rather than to declare the traits of character. The conversations in his later novels are an elaborate pattern of question, answer, misapprehension, connection, intimation, denial, agreement, repetition, and amplification—not actual speech at all, but with distinctly the uneven flow of actual conversation and a sense of interlocutors not talking for the benefit of the reader.

Later realists have not in general attempted the artful refinement of dialogue practiced by Meredith and James, but they have extended the conversational far toward actuality and have shown discrimination in the use of mannerism, dialect, and like identifying agents.

With reference to dialogue, French naturalism and the spirit of revolt against convention have worked together, naturalism impelling the novelists to select for portrayal commonplace individuals literally incapable of the more artificial forms of discourse, and revolt against literary convention precluding the literary or histrionic quality in all situations. The most obvious survival of literary traditions in dialogue appears in the speech of those always welcome, never too actual figures whose prototypes critics invariably find in the novels of Dickens.

What dialogue as an element of characterization be-

comes in the naturalistic novel and the novel of social criticism may be readily observed in the work of Mr. Wells. Structurally his employment of dialogue is that traditional in the novel since the eighteenth century—traits of the characters as well as larger themes exhibited in direct speech, interlocution always occurring at the crises.

The minor figures are identified very largely by dialogue, as for example the station master in *Mr. Britling:* "He was a small, elderly man with a determined-looking face and a sea voice, and it was clear he overestimated the distance of his hearers,"[12] assertions abundantly substantiated by the dialogue which followed. Occasionally recollection will show that one of the major characters in a novel by Mr. Wells is at least by half the creature of dialogue—Uncle Ponderevo, for example, with his modified Jingleisms:

> "I got this situation within twenty-four hours—others offered. It's an important firm—one of the best in London. I looked to that. I might have got four or five shillings a week more—elsewhere. Quarters I could name. But I said to them plainly, wages to go on with, but opportunity's my game—development. We understood each other.[13]

Dialogue is not, however, so imageal to memory as this in most of Mr. Wells's major characterizations. Usually it contributes merely to the sense of actuality, an effect due to the prevalence of the so-called conversational qualities. For example, the Wellsian notion of a Samurai, an ideal governing class, is developed by direct

[12] P. 11.

[13] *Tono-Bungay,* p. 90. By permission of the publishers, Duffield and Company.

discourse, as follows. Remington and a Mrs. Redmondson are watching the company at a London social gathering:

"They look so well nurtured," I said. "Well cared for. I like their quiet, well-trained movements, their pleasant consideration for each other."

"Kindly, good-tempered, and at bottom selfish," she said, "like rather carefully trained, rather pampered children. What else can you expect from them?"

"They are good tempered, anyhow," I witnessed, "and that's an achievement. I don't think I could ever be content under a bad-tempered, sentimentalizing strenuous government. That's why I couldn't stand the Roosevelt régime in America. One's chief surprise when one comes across these big people for the first time is their admirable easiness and real personal modesty. I confess I admire them. Oh! I like them. I wouldn't at all mind, I believe, giving over the country to this aristocracy—given something."

"Which they haven't got."

"Which they haven't got—or they'd be the finest sort of people in the world."

"That something?" she inquired.

"I don't know. I've been puzzling my wits to know. They've done all sorts of things. . . . ."

"That's Lord Wrassleton," she interrupted "whose leg was broken—you remember?—at Spion Kop. . . . ."

"It's healed very well. . . . . Most of these people have at any rate shown pluck,—brought something off."

"Not quite enough," she suggested.

"I think that's it," I said. "Not quite enough—not quite hard enough," I added.[14]

One suspects that Eliot would have done this in two solid paragraphs of well-cadenced sentences; perhaps a

[14] *The New Machiavelli*, p. 334. Excerpts reprinted by permission of the publishers, Duffield and Company.

Felix Holt[15] or a Deronda would have delivered it to a suitable group of auditors. As it appears in *The New Machiavelli* it is perhaps no more individualizing than it would have been in the hypothecated passage from Eliot; but it is distinctly more actual, more in the tone and manner of things said daily in a world of human beings.

Even the large situations Mr. Wells conducts in the conversational manner. Remington confesses thus his infidelity to his wife:

"I want to tell you something," I said. "I wish you'd sit down for a moment or so. . . . ."

Once I had begun, it seemed to me I had to go through with it.

Something in the quality of my voice gave her an intimation of unusual gravity. She looked at me steadily for a moment and sat down slowly in my armchair. "What is it?" she said.

I went on awkwardly. "I've got to tell you—something extraordinarily distressing," I said.

She was manifestly altogether unaware.

"There seems to be a good deal of scandal abroad—I've only recently heard of it—about myself—and Isabel."

"Isabel!"

I nodded.

"What do they say?" she asked.

It was difficult, I found, to speak.

"They say she's my mistress."

"Oh! How abominable!"

She spoke with the most natural indignation. Our eyes met.

. . . . . .

"Margaret," I said, "I'm afraid you'll have to believe it."

Margaret sat very still. When I looked at her again, her face was very white, and her distressed eyes scrutinized me. Her lips quivered as she spoke. "You really mean—that?" she said.

[15] In *Felix Holt*.

I nodded.
"I never dreamt."
"And that is why—we've been apart?"
I thought. "I suppose it is."
"Why have you told me now?"
"Those rumours. I didn't want any one else to tell you."
"Or else it wouldn't have mattered?"
"No."[16]

The foregoing may be no truer to the basic facts of life and no clearer a revelation thereof than George Eliot's more conventional treatment of crises. The whole merit of any contrast between the two writers is to indicate how far in some sixty years dialogue has gone toward actuality.

Although the Wellsian dialogue will serve as representative of current realistic novels, Mr. Galsworthy deserves special mention. He commands all the devices utilized by Mr. Wells, showing besides the playwright's boldness in the use of mannerism as identifying tags—James's "No one ever tells me anything";[17] Aunt Juley's constant saying of the wrong thing:[18] he preserves always a sense of trait and personality, always the tone and diction of actual life. To this he adds many implications, depending now upon incidental descriptive details, now upon the spoken words alone, that is, equally upon the actors and their lines.

In the following situation, dialogue itself is paramount. June Forsyte and Bosinney, engaged, are dining with Soames Forsyte and his wife Irene. June has just

[16] *The New Machiavelli,* pp. 437–38. By permission of the publishers, Duffield and Company.

[17] In *The Forsyte Saga.* [18] *Ibid.*

had conclusive evidence that Irene and Bosinney are falling in love. Soames, although he dislikes Bosinney, has let his proprietary, stand-pat instinct rule out suspicions. Note how clearly traits emerge, June's child-like forthrightness struggling to assert itself, Soames's labored disregard of things obvious, his unfeigned interest in his food, which is the "property" nearest at hand; note the tinge of poetry, of something spontaneous and inevitable coloring the relationship of Irene and Bosinney; note how the full import of the situation seems to follow even the barest of these speeches.

Dinner began in silence; the women facing one another, and the men.

In silence the soup was finished—excellent, if a little thick; and the fish was brought. In silence it was handed.

Bosinney ventured: "It's a fine spring day."

"Spring!" said June; "there isn't a breath of air!" No one replied.

The fish was taken away, a fine fresh sole from Dover. And Bilson brought Champagne, a bottle swathed around the neck with white.

Soames said: "You'll find it dry."

Cutlets were handed, each pink-frilled about the legs. They were refused by June, and silence fell.

Soames said: "You'd better take a cutlet, June; there's nothing coming."

But June again refused, so they were borne away. And then Irene asked: "Phil, have you heard my blackbird?"

Bosinney answered: "Rather—he's got a hunting song. As I came round I heard him in the Square."

"He's such a darling!"

"Salad, sir?" Spring chicken was removed.

But Soames was speaking: "The asparagus is very poor.

Bosinney, glass of sherry with your sweet? June, you're drinking nothing!"

June said: "You know I never do, wine's such horrid stuff!"

An apple charlotte came upon a silver dish. And smilingly Irene said: "The azaleas are wonderful this year."

To this Bosinney murmured: "Wonderful? The scent's extraordinary!"

June said: "How *can* you like the scent? Sugar, please, Bilson."

Sugar was handed her, and Soames remarked: "This charlotte's good!"

The charlotte was removed. Long silence followed. Irene beckoning said: "Take out the azalea, Bilson. Miss June can't bear the scent."

"No, let it stay," said June.

Olives from France with Russian caviare, were placed on little plates. And Soames remarked: "Why can't we have the Spanish?" But no one answered.

The olives were removed. Lifting her tumbler June demanded: "Give me some water, please!" Water was given her. A silver tray was brought, with German plums. There was a lengthy pause. In perfect harmony all were eating them.

Bosinney counted up the stones: "This year . . . . next year . . . . some time.—"

Irene finished softly: "Never. There was such glorious sunset. The sky's all ruby still—so beautiful."

He answered: "Underneath the dark."

Their eyes had met and June cried scornfully: "A London sunset!"

Egyptian cigarettes were handed in a silver box: Soames, taking one, remarked: "What time's your play begin?"

No one replied, and Turkish coffee followed in enamelled cups.

Irene smiling quietly, said: "If only . . . ."

"Only what?" said June.

"If only it could always be spring!"

Brandy was handed; it was pale and old.

Soames said: "Bosinney, better take some brandy!"

Bosinney took a glass; they all arose.

"You want a cab?" asked Soames.

June answered, "No. My cloak, Bilson." Her cloak was brought.

Irene, from the window, murmured: "Such a lovely night! The stars are coming out!"

Soames added: "Well, I hope you'll both enjoy yourselves."

From the door June answered: "Thanks. Come Phil."

Bosinney cried: "I'm coming."

Soames smiled a sneering smile and said: "I wish you luck!"

And at the door Irene watched them go.

Bosinney called: "Good night!"

"Good night!" she answered softly.[19]

Dialogue such as this, even though none of its detail abides in the reader's recollection, will have done much to impress upon him a non-imageal conception of traits and a sense of contact with actual personalities.

The psychological and expressionist writers of Group III have contributed no refinements in the use of dialogue more striking than those already referred to; they have merely pushed actuality to its extreme limits. Mr. Lawrence, it is true, not infrequently makes dialogue carry the burden of a metaphysics that renders normal speech impossible, but at other times his dialogue is thoroughly in agreement with that of Miss Richardson and Miss Sinclair in utter fidelity to life. A large part of the disregard of type and the consequent incongruity heretofore noted is due to this literal transcription of human speech.

[19] *The Forsyte Saga*, pp. 136–37. By permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Miss Richardson, if she is to be faithful to her method, cannot in the least modify that discourse which she records as direct conversation. She may elide in a large way, but she must reproduce actual words and actual sequences. When she uses an extensive block of dialogue she produces a unique effect. Here is talk between Miriam and her sisters.

Miriam grinned.

"You've got it. I knew you would. The Misses Perne have engaged Miss Miriam Henderson as resident teacher for the junior school."

"Oh, yes, I've got it," smiled Miriam. "But don't let's talk about it. It's just an old school, a house. I don't know a bit what it'll be like. I've got three bally blooming weeks. Don't let's talk about it."

"Awri."

"What about Saturday?"

"It's all right. Ted was at the club."

"Was he!"

"Yes, old scarlet face, he were."

"I'm *not.*"

"He came in just before closing time and straight up to me and ast where you were. He looked sick when I told him, and so fagged."

"It's awfully hot in town," murmured Miriam tenderly.

She went to the piano and struck a note very softly.

"He played a single with a duffer and lost it."

"Oh, well, of course, he was so tired."

"Yes, but it wasn't that. It was because you weren't there. He's simply no good when you're not there, now. He's perfectly different."

Miriam struck her note again.

"Listen that's E flat."

"Go on!"

"That's a chord in E flat. Isn't it lovely? It sounds perfectly different in C. Listen. Isn't it funny?"

"Well, don't you want to know why it's all right about Saturday?"

"Yes, screamingly."

[They discuss arrangements for Saturday.]

"If we have the breakfast-room piano in the hall it'll bung up the hall."

"Yes, but the Erard bass is so perfect for waltzes."

"And the be-rilliant treble is so all right in the votaire."

"I thought it was Eve and I talked about the Collard treble."

"Well, I was there."

"Anyhow we'll have the grand in the conservatory. Oh, Bacchus! Ta-ra-ra-boom-deay."

"Tea," said a rounded voice near the key-hole.

. . . . . .

. . . . Eve fled through the hall.

Miriam flung after her with a yell and caught at her slender body. "I've a great mind to drag down your old hair."

"Tea," smiled Eve serenely.

"All *right,* I'm coming, damn you, aren't I?"

"Oh, Mimmy."

"Well damn *me,* then. Somebody in the house must swear. I say Eve?"

"What?"

"Nothing, only I *say.*"

"Um."[20]

More literal than this dialogue can scarcely be; the only selection exercised by the writer is in choice of passage for transcription. The effect upon characterization is obvious. In the reader's recollection the words of Miriam and her sisters fade as the page is turned; but they have abundantly served their purpose by sweeping aside every trace of artifice, by confronting the reader

[20] *Backwater,* pp. 31–35. By permission of the author.

with the immediate human presence. In consequence every symbol by which memory reconstructs the personality of the speakers is the more like something originating in life and not in books.

From the conventional, to the literary, then to the actual—from identification by artifice to that by actuality seems to be the larger development of dialogue in the period under consideration.

2. THE SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

Of purely subjective characterization there are two fairly distinct kinds. There is the reported or generalized account of an individual's thinking with no attempt to render it literally in its original form; habitual modes of thought or long periods of reflection are often so reported. There is the detailed account of mental processes either in the language of the author-reporter or in the very form and manner in which the moments of experience occurred; here will be all varieties of consciousness—sensation, perception, image, simple concept, involved concept, and elemental emotion and mood. Between these two extremes there are, of course, infinite gradations. In the following discussion will appear ample illustration of subjective characterization in all its variations.

When the test of recollection is applied to purely subjective material as an element of characterization, there appears at once a division into the imageal and the non-imageal, of which the non-imageal, as in the case of recollected background detail in characterization, is seen to have taken over the greater part of the imageal. Thus even highly complex personalities whose charac-

terization has been accomplished largely by the subjective method may be recalled rather by the reader's conclusions as to their habitual methods of thought than by a distinct reconstruction of moments of experience. The figure of Clare Hartill[21] will serve as an illustration; certain typical moments of her two-mindedness may linger in memory, but they must be supplemented by far more general memories if the character is to be adequately recalled.

Briefly, the most noteworthy result of the transition of imageal subjective material into the non-imageal of recollection is an enhancement of actuality; contact with the stuff of experience can effect a sense of validity that survives long after detail images have faded out of memory. In the direction of just this effect have been the major developments in the subjective elements of characterization since George Eliot. In other words the detailing of consciousness has become more and more important; conventional barriers, social and literary, have gone down and widened the old and made accessible new fields of experience; there has been search after the components of experience and an attempt to render them to the very quintessence.

It will not do to say that Eliot and Meredith exclusively generalized the mental processes of their characters; but it is true that critical comment upon these authors often confuses terms and quantities, mistaking elaborate discussion of characters' thought for elaborate thought-stuff itself. Although there are not a few situations in which George Eliot and Meredith follow a char-

[21] *Vide supra*, p. 16.

acter's thinking step by step, they rarely phrase it in the language of the thinker and Eliot habitually interweaves comment and interpretation. Still more rarely do they attempt anything resembling the stream of actual consciousness. The nearest approach to this comes in the occasional rendering of a sensation or in the vivid detail of a dramatic scene. Richard Feverel, for example, in the famous storm scene feels upon his palm the warm tongue of the tiny leveret which he has rescued; "Dorothea's heart seemed to turn over as if it had a blow."[22] Adam Bede has stamped upon his memory Hetty's masklike face at the trial. At times, there is an attempt to indicate what may be called the secondary consciousness, the stream of unexpressed thought which may run opposite to the current uppermost in the mind. Thus Redworth, while conversing with Diana estimates to himself the sufficiency of his income for matrimony: he has a goodish salary and dividends may increase; yet, unfortunately, all of his seniors are hale and lusty.[23] Or Gwendolen takes stock of Grandcourt during their first interview:

> (Pause, during which she imagined various degrees and modes of opinion about herself that might be entertained by Grandcourt.)
>
> (Pause, during which Gwendolin . . . . made a brief graphic description of him to an indefinite hearer.)[24]

But these are scarcely typical specimens of Eliot's and Meredith's subjective characterization. More representative is the following:

[22] *Middlemarch,* II, 489.

[23] *Diana of the Crossways,* p. 34.

[24] *Daniel Deronda,* I, 95.

Into this second life Bulstrode's past had now risen, only the pleasures of it seeming to have lost their quality. Night and day, without interruption, save for brief sleep which only wove retrospect and fear into a fantastic present, he felt the scenes of his earlier life coming between him and everything else, as obstinately as when we look through the window from the lighted room the objects we turn our backs on are still before us, instead of grass and trees. The successive events inward and outward were then in our view: though each might be dwelt on in turn the rest still kept their hold on consciousness.[25]

Once more he saw himself the young banker's clerk . . . . again he heard himself called Brother Bulstrode. . . . . Again he felt himself thinking of the ministry.[26]

Mentally surrounded with that past again, Bulstrode had the same pleasure—indeed the years had been perpetually spinning them into intricate thickness, like masses of spiderweb padding moral sensibilities. Nay, as age made egoism the more eager but less enjoying, his soul had become more saturated with the belief that he did everything for God's sake, being indifferent to it for his own. . . . .[27]

The generalized and reported quality of this requires no comment. Somewhat more specific is Meredith, but he is by no means notable for any literal immediacy in the treatment of consciousness, as the following excerpts will indicate:

Her brain was a steam-wheel throughout the night; everything that could be thought of was tossed, nothing grasped.[28]

For look—to fly could not be interpreted as a flight. It was but a stepping aside, a disdain of defending herself, and a wrapping herself in her dignity. Women would be with her. She called

[25] *Middlemarch,* II, 554.

[26] *Ibid.,* II, 555. [27] *Ibid.,* II, 556.

[28] *Diana of the Crossways,* pp. 113–14. Excerpts by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

on the noblest of them to justify the course she chose, and they did, in an almost audible murmur.[29]

Reflecting on her interview with Redworth, though she had performed her part in it placidly, her skin burned. It was the beginning of tortures if she stayed in England.[30]

By staying to defend herself she forfeited her attitude of dignity and lost all chance of her reward. And name the sort of world it is, dear friends, for which we are to sacrifice our one hope of freedom, that we may preserve our fair fame in it![31]

Diana cried aloud, "My freedom!" feeling as a butterfly flown out of a box the stretches of sunny earth beneath spacious heavens. . . . . she had bound herself to the man: voluntarily, quite inexplicably. Voluntarily as we say. But there must be a spell upon us at times. Upon young women there certainly is.[32]

There are, to be sure, flashes of immediacy in this, but the effect of the whole is general.

After 1880 French naturalism became evident in the subjective characterizations of English realism. In novels showing this influence more clearly there is a tendency toward smaller passages of reflection; there is a greater consciousness of scene on the part of the characters than was the case in the older English novel; and there is use of trivial or apparently irrelevant details of perception, a device of great importance in recent practice.

All these may be noted in Hardy's work. Although he does not insist on the trivial or irrelevant as a matter of consciousness, he occasionally gives it that value; for on many a page he adroitly advances his narrative by making his reader aware, in one and the same phrase, of

[29] *Loc. cit.*

[30] *Loc. cit.*

[31] *Loc. cit.*

[32] *Loc. cit.*

minute attendant circumstances and of moods in those present. Thus the trivial becomes more than actuality.[33] A more pregnant and symbolic use of the trivial occurs in the moment when Tess waits outside the door of Clare's father, whom she is destined not to see, abstractedly watching a bloodied piece of wrapping paper and several straws that whirled heavily in an eddy of the ceaseless wind.[34]

Careful inspection of Hardy's novels will, however, show that in common with the French naturalists, he is at no pains to indicate the exact terms in which his characters became aware of their surroundings: he rarely phrases their perception of setting in what is unmistakably their own diction, and he makes objective many descriptive passages that might be subjective. Thus for example, in the episode where Tess's horse is killed, the scene has extreme vividness: we hear bird-notes; we see the pale glow following sunrise; see objects take shape along the lane; see the whiteness of Tess's face; and note the colors that form upon the pool of blood at her feet.[35] Excellent material this is, but there is difficulty in point of view here. The average reader meeting this in its proper context will feel that he is looking through Tess's eyes until he finds that she is part of the picture; for the thing of importance is Tess's mood and

[33] See *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* p. 209.

[34] *Ibid.,* p. 341. Hardy's novels prior to *Tess* show naturalistic features but there is no indication that they are of French origin. See Margery Oliver, *The Influence of French Naturalism on English Fiction,* p. 44.

[35] *Ibid.,* p. 32.

the whole situation should be distinctly hers. Hardy is, in short, far from seeking complete actuality in subjective material; he merely inclines that way.

The reverse of any insensitivity to the point of view appears in the realism of Henry James. His great contribution to subjective characterization is in asserting the truism that no two people see the same thing in the same way—and in his demonstration of what may be done by suggestion, the suggestion of states of mind which in themselves suggest far more than they reveal explicitly. He did not, however, greatly further actuality in subjective portrayal. He is for one thing too far from the average and the commonplace. His Strethers[36] and the like whose consciousness he anatomizes are literary minded and exceptional, chosen obviously not for their typical or universal qualities but for their ability to think after the manner of Henry James. For another thing, his scheme of the novel makes no place at all for the details of physical sensation.

In the biographic novel and the novel of social criticism, however, there is after 1900 subjective commonplaceness and actuality enough and to spare. The reasons are obvious. By 1900 the older Russian realists were all available in French or English translation and naturalism, merging though it was into symbolism in France, had in England a new life with Moore and Hardy as its exponents; and the combat against convention, social, religious, and literary, was under way and had already involved the novel. The interplay of

[36] In *The Ambassadors.*

these and all the other forces already considered in this study has made the subjective element in the novels of Group II distinctly noteworthy.

The use of the trivial and irrelevant has been extended in the directions suggested by the two excerpts from Hardy. In the way of corroboration or actuality and of representation or symbolism, the trivial has been made definitely subjective, with a resulting vividness and immediacy unknown to the late-Victorians. Mr. Bennett is particularly adept at this:

> On a Saturday afternoon of the following August, Hilda was sitting at a book in the basement parlour of "Cannon's Boarding-house" in Preston Street. She heard through the open window several pairs of feet mounting wearily to the front door, and then the long remote tinkling of the bell. Within the house there was no responsive sound: but from the porch came a clearing of throats, a muttering impatient yet resigned, and a vague shuffling. After a long pause the bell rang again; and then the gas globe over Hilda's head vibrated for a moment to footsteps in the hall, and the front door was unlatched.[37]

The trivial or irrelevant perception or reflection in moments of intense emotion becomes with both Mr. Bennett and Mr. Wells almost a mannerism, in which one detects an element of conscious revolt at the literary convention that upon great occasions the mind is filled with thoughts of appropriate magnitude. At its best this use of the trivial carries actuality, an intensifying of the central emotion by contrast, and a sort of grave comic relief, a symbolic irony at the expense of human pretentiousness.

[37] *Hilda Lessways,* p. 347. Copyright 1911 by George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

Here is the consciousness of Hilda Lessways in a crisis:

She did not see him; she was aware of him. And she was aware of the closed door behind them. One of the basket chairs, though empty, continued to creak, like a thing alive. Faintly, very faintly, she could hear the piano—Mrs. Boutwood playing! Overhead they were checking the linen from the laundry, as usual on Saturday afternoon.[38]

Here is Samuel Povey in one of the most exalted moments of his life:

All Samuel's flesh tingled as a heavy wave of emotion rolled through his being. It was just as if some one had dealt him a blow unimaginably tremendous. His heart shivered, as a ship shivers at the mountainous crash of the waters. . . . . He thought of *his* wife and child, innocently asleep in the cleanly pureness of *his* home. And he felt the roughness of his coat collar around his neck and the insecurity of his trousers. [He has dressed hastily.][39]

And in the following we view Richard Remington waiting to confess sexual irregularity to his wife:

I began walking up and down the room between those cyclamens and the cabinet. There were little gold fishermen on the cabinet fishing from little islands that each had a pagoda and a tree, and there were also men in boats or something. I couldn't determine what, and some obscure suboffice in my mind concerned itself with that quite intently.[40]

The situation of which the last excerpt forms a part calls to mind the importance of subjective materials in the naturalistic revolt against propriety in realism. Here Samuel Butler announced the doctrine, George Moore

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

[39] *The Old Wives' Tale*, p. 226. Copyright 1911, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

[40] *The New Machiavelli*, p. 222. Duffield and Co., publishers.

applied it objectively and the biographical-critical novelist gave it new power and immediacy by making it subjective. Mr. Wells details the disgust following a sexual debauch.[41] Mr. Bennett renders a precise account of the pangs of childbirth[42] or presents such vividly unconventional sensation as this:

> He could smell the stuff of her veil, the sarscenet of her bodice, and, as it were, wrapped in these odors as her body was wrapped in its clothes, the faint fleshly perfume of her body itself.[43]

Such minute exactness in matters of sensation as in the foregoing passage is indicative of the closer fidelity with which realists since 1900 or thereabouts have followed the vagaries of human consciousness. Reflective passages, for example, are more and more stamped with the thinker's own way of using words; they become in effect silent soliloquies. Mr. Galsworthy, with his fine instinct for dialogue, shows many instances of this:

> Was the fellow going to jilt her? He longed to go and say to him: Look here, you sir! Are you going to jilt my granddaughter? But how could he? Knowing little or nothing, he was yet certain, with his unerring astuteness, that there was something going on. . . . .[44]
>
> "This fellow, he thought, "may not be a scamp; his face is not a bad one, but he's a queer fish. I don't know what to make of him. I shall never know what to make of him! They tell me he works like a nigger, but I see no good coming of it. . . . . When

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

[42] *The Old Wives' Tale*, p. 183.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[44] *The Forsyte Saga*, p. 144. Excerpts by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

he comes here, he sits as glum as a monkey. If I ask him what wine he'll have, he says: 'Thanks, any wine.' If I offer him a cigar, he smokes it as if it were a two penny German thing."[45]

Of even greater importance for actuality is the fuller recognition of the strata of consciousness referred to in connection with Eliot and Meredith. This sense of diverse streams of thought and faithfulness in recording the trivial have produced a distinct method for the subjective treatment of crises. Mr. Britling's reception of the news of his son's death is typical:

It was a mile and a quarter from the post office to the Dower House, and it was always his custom to give telegraph messengers who came to his house two pence, and he wanted very much to get rid of the telegraph girl, who stood expectantly before him holding her red bicycle. He felt now very sick and strained; he had a conviction that if he did not by an effort maintain his bearing cool and dry he would howl aloud. He felt in his pocket for money; there were some coppers and a shilling. He pulled it all out together and stared at it.

He had an absurd conviction that this ought to be a sixpenny telegram. The thing worried him. He wanted to give the brat sixpence, and he had only threepence and a shilling and he didn't know what to do and his brain couldn't think. It would be a shocking thing to give her a shilling, and he couldn't somehow give just coppers for so important a thing as Hugh's death. Then all this problem vanished and he handed the child a shilling. . . . .[46]

The whole characterization of Mr. Britling might well serve to indicate what may be done with the subjective in presenting a complex personality. Applying

[45] *Loc. cit.*

[46] *Mr. Britling Sees It Through,* p. 374. Copyright 1916 by The Macmillan Company. Excerpts reprinted here and subsequently by permission.

the test of recollection, one may find that no small part of Mr. Britling is his night-time reflections:

> On these black nights, when the personal Mr. Britling was going on, and when the impersonal Mr. Britling would be thinking how unsatisfactorily his universe was going on, the whole mental process had a likeness to some complex piece of orchestral music wherein the organ deplored the melancholy destinies of the race while the picolo lamented the secret trouble of Mrs. Harrowdean; the big drum thundered at the Irish politicians and all the violins bewailed the intellectual laxity of the university system. Meanwhile the trumpets prophesied wars and disasters, the cymbals ever and again inserted a clashing jar about the fatal delay of the automobile insurance, while the triangle broke into a plangent solo on the topic of a certain rotten gate-post he always forgot in the daytime, and how in consequence the cows from the glebe farm got into the garden and ate Mrs. Britling's carnations.[47]

Obviously, then, subjective characterization has been greatly extended by the novelists of Group II but the final expansion comes at the hands of the writers of Group III, whose work begins about the end of the first decade of the present century. It is they who have analyzed sensation into its finer components, who have sought to render the quintessential value of being and feeling, who have faithfully recorded the vagaries of thought, who have opened the novel to the full stream of consciousness.

Mr. Joyce bears the palm here, with a daring that savors of exhibitionism. He has gone to such extremes in recording organic and sexual sensation that to show forth his accomplishment would make these pages undesirably pornographic.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

Technically, he is exemplar of the modern attempt to make representative art imitate utter actuality of impression, particularly the swiftness of actual perception. Thus such seemingly dadaistic things as "mangongwheeltracktrollyglarejuggernaut";[48] and thus the breathless unpunctuated passages, of which the forty-two page final chapter in *Ulysses* may be a sort of deliberate parody.

Miss Richardson is, on the whole, safer for study, and really more ingenious than Mr. Joyce.

Any chapter from the earlier volumes of her *Pilgrimage,* for example, will name sensations minute and powerful because, though of lifelong familiarity to the reader, they have not become literary commonplaces:

> The little fur pelerine . . . . tickled her neck and she felt the outline of her stiff hat like a board against her uneasy forehead.[49]
>
> She stood breathing in curious odours: faint odours of new wood and fresh upholstery, and the strange strong subdued emanation coming from the black grand piano, a mingling of the smell of aromatic wood with the hard raw bitter tang of metal and the muffled wooly pungency of the new felting.[50]
>
> The soles of her new patent leather shoes felt pleasantly smooth against the thick carpet.[51]
>
> . . . . To breathe in gulps of air like this? . . . . It was as if worry were being taken out of her temples. She felt her eyes grow strong and clear. A coolness flowed through her—obstructed only where she felt the heavy pad of hair pinned to the back of her head, the line of her hat, the hot line of compression round her waist and the confinement of her inflexible boots.[52]

[48] P. 429.

[49] *Pointed Roofs,* p. 128.

[50] *Honey Comb,* p. 205.

[51] *Ibid.,* p.40.

[52] *Pointed Roofs,* p. 128.

When she began at the hard thick edge there always seemed to be tender places on her gums, her three hollow teeth were uneasy. . . . . After the first few mouthfuls of solid bread a sort of padding seemed to take place and she could go on forgetful.[53]

Engagingly fresh, precise, and immediate as this is, it will not at all suffice for such a fiery spirit as Mr. Lawrence; he will have the quintessence of experience, a state as we have seen in citation from his work, almost beyond external sensation, merging into the mystic and inexpressible:

The whole of his blood seemed to burst into flame and he could scarcely breathe. . . . .[54]

His blood was concentrated like a flame in his chest . . . . There were flashes in his blood.[55]

. . . . That thickening and quickening of his blood, that peculiar concentration in the breast, as if something were alive there, a new self or a new centre of consciousness.[56]

He felt as if his living were smeared away into the beyond, near and quite lovable.[57]

. . . . It was more like pain-like agony than joy. She swayed herself to and fro in a paroxysm of unbearable sensation, because she loved him. . . . . Right in her bowels she felt it—the terrible unbearable feeling.[58]

In these excerpts the perfervid has excluded the trivial and inconsequential, and there is a tendency to restore the big scene in unimpaired largeness. But the trivial and the inconsequential are usually an important part of the new subjective technique, whether for crises or the stressless hours of everyday life, and often with

[53] *Backwater*, p. 83.

[54] *Sons and Lovers*, p. 220. Thomas Seltzer, Inc., publisher.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 221.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 316.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 354.

[58] *The Lost Girl*, p. 198.

no difference of intensity. The reader of Miss Richardson soon learns that the sudden flash of vivid perception or sensation does not at all mean that a crisis is imminent or that the thing illumined is to be held in the memory for its importance to subsequent events. In the following passage there is no artistic or literary reason for the sudden singling out of the elm trees, except possibly that for the moment they objectify the glamor of being alive. A clearer truth in the passage is that it represents the essentially illogical way in which consciousness rays out upon a multifarious universe:

> As the little party of four making its way home, cleansed and hungry, united and happy, stood for a moment on a tree-planted island, half way across a wide open space, Minna with her eager smile, said, gazing, "Oh, I would like a glass Bier." Miriam saw very distinctly the clear sunlight on the boles of the trees showing every ridge and shade of colour as it had done on the peaked summerhouse porch in the morning.[59]

Miss Richardson, except for the possible disregard of the fringe of consciousness, has caught the exact trick and manner of mental life, the varying simultaneous levels of awareness, the intertwining threads of idea, the amazing leap-up of things from the foreconscious—absolute actuality of thought except that perforce, despite all amplitude, selection must in a measure be observed.

Here is a typical passage:

> Christ said that ["My peace I give unto you"] but peace came from God—the peace of God that passeth all understanding. How could Christ give that? He put himself between God and man. Why could not people get at God direct. He was somewhere.

[59] *Pointed Roofs*, p. 152.

The steam was disappearing out of the window; the row of objects ranged along the far side of the bath grew clear. Miriam looked at these, seeking escape from the problem—the upright hand glass, the brush lay propped against it, the small bottle of Jockey Club, the pink box of French face powder . . . . perhaps one day she would learn to use powder without looking like a pierrot . . . . how nice to have a thick white skin that never changed and took powder like a soft bloom. . . . .

But as long as the powder box was there it would be impossible to reach that state of peace and freedom that Thomas à Kempis meant. "To Miriam, from her friend, Harriett A. Perne." Had Miss Haddie found anything of it? No—she was horribly afraid of God and turned to Christ as a sort of protecting lover to be flattered and to lean upon. . . . .

. . . . . .

Things were astounding enough, enough to make you die of astonishment if you did nothing at all. Being *alive*. If one could realise that clearly enough, one *would* die.

Everything everyone did was just a distraction from astonishment.

It could only be done in a convent. . . . . It cost money to get into a convent, except as a servant. If you were a servant you could not stay day and night in your cell—watching the light and darkness until you died. . . . . Perhaps in women's convents they would not let you, anyhow.

Why did men always have more freedom? . . . . His head had a listening look. His eyes were waiting desperately, seeing nothing of the things in the world . . . . he wanted to stay still until the voice of things grew so clear and near that one could give a great cry and fall dead.[60]

After two or three volumes of such as this, one has an uncanny sense of having tasted dual existence. He has been Miriam Henderson. His recollection of her is

[60] *Honeycomb*, pp. 223–24. By permission of the author. The excision after the third paragraph is not Miss Richardson's. Enough has been quoted to give the effect of the passage.

as his recollection of his own self: what he remembers clearly is imageal and what he recalls vaguely is invested with an actuality that needs no symbols, an actuality that has come from deep immersion in a living stream of consciousness. In this actuality lies the identity of Miriam Henderson, undemonstrable, incontrovertible, so long as the reader does not attempt to live vicariously too many fictional lives. One Miriam Henderson is almost enough for any person.

Is it wrong, then, to sum up the developments in subjective characterization since George Eliot in the one word—actuality?

3. THE SUBJECTIVE AS A MODE OF NARRATIVE

Possibly the most significant of all recent developments in narrative actuality is its extension in that element of characterization just discussed. This extension has not merely achieved the conquest of the last domain open to actuality but has also constituted a new attempt at the solution of the twofold problem that seemingly confronts the writer of long prose narrative.

The problem, crudely stated, is this: shall the narrative be impersonal or personal; shall the reader be left to make his own interpretation of the material set before him, or shall the author specify what the reader should feel and think? The author wishes, of course, to retain the actuality and stimulation of drama, but he wishes to retain likewise the privilege of discoursing upon life in a more direct and ample manner than is possible in drama. The solution of the problem is usually a compromise with a strong suggestion of the author's

preference for one of the two modes of treatment. English novelists, as critics have abundantly noted, tend to present strongly personal views of life and to insist, at least during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that the reader shall not miss the point.

From Fielding to George Eliot this tendency manifested itself chiefly through the author's block comment that is often as much out of the current of the story as are the editorial footnote and the bracketed phrase. At its artistic best, this practice appears in Thackeray's you-and-I *causerie;* at its worst, among writers of any consequence at all, it produces certain of Trollope's laborious flippancies.

The very evident shortcomings of this method cannot permit it to satisfy the conscientious artist, however intent he may be upon shaping his reader's mind to preconceived ends. With Meredith began fairly continuous experimentation toward the refinement of what may be called interpreted or personalized realism, that is, toward the use of an observer or a narrator who is neither the author nor a major figure in the action.[61] Thanks, in some part at least, to this improvement of the older narrative technique, the more didactic English fiction escaped the danger, manifest in George Eliot's later novels, of becoming a sort of illustrated lecture, and attained a new vitality that enabled it to stand beneath the flood of social criticism, emerging even in *The New*

[61] In verse Browning was working in this field, notably in *The Ring and the Book,* 1869, and in the monologues. Among earlier attempts of this sort in prose there is, of course, Thackeray's *Henry Esmond,* 1852.

Machiavelli and *The Research Magnificent* as recognizable realism by no means devoid of actuality.

The contribution of Meredith to personalized narrative appears distinctly as a phase of characterization. Perfunctory in his use of external actualities, acknowledged believer in "mind-stuff" as the proper material for narrative, impatient of minute distinctions between individuals, he deliberately cut himself off from many of those devices with which so painstaking a workman as George Eliot substantiated her characterizations. Partly to compensate for this lack, partly to insist upon the social significance of his people, Meredith experimented with the device of indirect presentation, submitting to the reader not merely the author's opinion upon an individual, but exhibiting that character as a highly significant entity firmly established in the minds of a variety of people. George Eliot, to be sure, attempted something of this nature in certain of her later works, notably in *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda,* but the more thoroughgoing application of the method is found in Meredith.

Indirect characterization proved particularly helpful in the Great Mel of *Evan Harrington* and in *Diana of the Crossways,* where the real validity of the book, the central fact of its social criticism, is Diana's possession of exceptional mentality.[62] Apparently Meredith desired this characteristic to be evident without delay but did not care to undertake direct demonstration of its presence. Therefore, in the first chapter, he invoked that group of diarists already referred to here, credible

[62] *Vide supra,* p. 12.

enough persons, who after the manner of their kind, had carefully noted Diana's *bon mots* and had recorded her regnancy in the London of her day.

With Meredith, indirect characterization, which had been merely an unavoidable condition of first-personal narrative or a vaguely general convenience in third-personal narrative, began to take over some of the duties that had been imposed upon interpretative comment by the author.[63]

Stevenson (if one may for a moment consider a romanticist) extended the practice of indirect presentation to include not only characterization but the whole novel. In *The Master of Ballantrae,* the narrator does not, like Henry Esmond, for example, speak with the very intonation of his creator; he is not the author thinly disguised; he is a distinctly separate medium of observation and expression; he exists not to bear an important part in the action but to enhance the relation of events and to guide the reader's interpretations definitely though inobviously.

By this method the author, to all intents and purposes, retains control of the interpretation of his narrative material yet does not sacrifice actuality at each assertion of his purpose. There are, however, serious limitations to the method. Henry James, if one may accept Mr. Percy Lubbock's analysis,[64] developed in his later novels a true solution of the difficulties: James rejected narrative in the first person, but kept all the better

[63] See Adam Brandel, *Die Technik des Romans bei George Meredith,* pp. 54–65.

[64] *The Craft of Fiction,* chaps. ix–xviii.

features of that form. That is, in *The Ambassadors* and *The Wings of the Dove,* for example, there are no first-personal narrators whose retrospection presents the action; all is related in third person yet strictly from the point of view of important actors. Thus all can be made immediate and first-hand; but the author has not relinquished his right to guide and control the reader's response to the narrative, for the author it is who selects the "refracting" personalities through whom the story comes to the reader, and the author it is who determines not merely their traits but their moods.

An examination of James's method reveals, of course, the general refinement in the subjective element of characterization that has been noted. He reproduces a close approximation of actual consciousness. He refuses to allow his observers the privilege of interpreting facts more precisely and definitely than they would be interpreted in life itself. His observers work toward the solution of their problems by the groping, discontinuous process of actual consciousness, an effect heightened by the difficulty of the problems and by the unusual mental endowment of the observers. The reader knows no more about the deeper meaning of the thought presented to him than does the thinker himself. Says Mr. Lubbock in comment upon *The Ambassadors:*

> And so we must see for ourselves, the author must so arrange matters that Strether's thought will be made intelligible by a direct view of its surface. The immediate flaw or ripple of the moment, and the next and the next, will then take up the tale, like the speakers in a dialogue which gradually unfolds the subject of the play. Below the surface, behind the outer aspect of his mind, we do not penetrate; this is drama, and in drama the spec-

tator must judge by appearances. When Strether's mind is dramatized, nothing is shown but the passing images that anybody might detect, looking down upon a mind grown visible. There is no drawing upon extraneous sources of information: Henry James knows all there is to know of Strether; but he most carefully refrains from using his knowledge. He wishes us to accept nothing from him on authority—only to watch and learn.[65]

Thus James depends for drama and its power upon actuality in subjective material; and for interpretation, he depends upon his freedom of choice in the matter of observers, upon the determination of their moods and the general direction of their thought. He does not, however, feel the need of the uttermost subjective actuality. He avoids the more intimate sensory perceptions. Moreover, all sections of consciousness utilized by James are excised and shaped to one end: he sets the observer a relatively limited problem; what the reader gets is only the observer's struggle toward a solution of that problem.

With the more expressionistic realists, especially in the earlier volumes of Miss Richardson's *Pilgrimage,* appear the results of closer fidelity to actual consciousness. In those volumes Miss Richardson has not set her observer a problem or a task other than that of living and being intensely. There is rendered, then, record of an experience by contrast with which Strether's seems something rather distant and rather generalized. There is a closer simulation of the inconsequential and complex nature of mental life, hence a more picturesque and spirited action than any that James cared to produce in his subjective dramas.

[65] *Op. cit.*, p. 162.

That the expressionists have made any progress with interpretation is less clear than that they have gone far with actuality. The very lack of a problem before Miss Richardson's observer, the lack of a precise purpose and justification for the going-on of Miriam's consciousness, opens question. The reader does know what the world means to Miriam in so far as it means anything at all; but Miss Richardson has given Miriam no such impulse toward a comprehension of life as urges Strether toward the evaluation of his European discoveries. Strether goes about somebody's business; Miriam goes about nobody's.

Possibly it might be said that Miss Richardson has foresworn interpretation and dedicated herself to drama; but the fact remains that it is Miss Richardson who has created, is still creating Miriam, and that Miriam is, to many a reader, more a device for narrative than a personality. At any rate the earlier part of *Pilgrimage* represents the extreme of personalized narrative and affords a clear instance of the extent to which subjective actuality can modify narrative method. Mr. Joyce, too, will repay some study in this particular. For example, the Stephen Dedalus component of *Ulysses* mingles strangely with the other material. That Hamlet mood of Stephen announced early in the volume reaches out beyond his consciousness, grows and grows, until its bitterness informs the whole book. Yet how much of Stephen's consciousness goes with it? In how much is the sardonic satire of *Ulysses* the product of Stephen's brain, in how much is it more directly Mr. Joyce's? In that nightmarish "nighttown" episode, let

us say, how many of those abortive grotesques are Stephen's, and how many are Mr. Joyce's? No man can say—not even Mr. Joyce himself.

Other instances of personalized narrative more intricate than Miss Richardson's might be cited, for example, Clemence Dane's *Legend;*[66] and much might be said of retrospective narrative at the hand of Conrad and others; but there would be danger of accumulating useless evidence. Miss Richardson has taken personalized narrative as far as anyone toward actuality, and in so doing has made truly significant choice between drama and interpretation.

4. SUMMARY

What may be called verbal expression of a character's thought, whether that thought be originally spoken or unspoken by the character, is today as deeply marked with actuality as are the details of purely external depiction. Dialogue has emerged from the conventional and the literary and has acquired not merely actuality but new artistic force. Designation of mental processes has become precise, unconventional, and manifold to the point of constituting the whole narrative.

[66] Published in 1920.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The definition toward which this study was directed has reached measurable completeness. Yet in comment thereon so much remains unsaid despite voluminous current criticism, that there is urgent temptation to pause and consider, if not prophesy. Are these later developments landmarks of realism's utmost sail? Have fictionists adventured too far, or is a new artistry about to appear in the novel? Alluring topics these are—but they are not for these final pages. Better, after all, a bare summary restating entire the thesis of this volume.

In contrast with the late-Victorian novel, recent British realism shows a wider conception of normality and a greater intensity and amplitude of actuality. In characterization these are manifest as what have been called for convenience incongruity, extra-realism, and sharper specification in details of portrayal.

Certain general influences have had clear issue in the conditions of realism just designated. These influences fall into groups of varying distinctness and importance. These are: the literary, which includes naturalism, impressionism, symbolism, expressionism, and dadaism; the scientific and philosophical, where the important consideration is the shift of interest from conformity to type to variation, and with this the development of the doctrine of vitalism; the psychological, in

which the most potent thing is the body of Freudian theory dealing with sex and the unconscious.

In the widened sense of normality may be recognized something of each of these forces, but the new psychology is by far the most obvious factor. The manifestation of this latter influence is in large measure the thing called here incongruity of characterization.

In the amplified and intensified actuality are almost all the factors of importance in the new sense of normality, but symbolism is of special note, as is also the tendency of science toward metaphysics. The strongest evidence of these influences in characterization is the effect termed extra-realism.

Yet more light falls upon the developments in actuality when the materials and elements of character portrayal are examined. Such a study also reveals the exact manner in which the new conception of normality has been proclaimed in fiction. More and more have realists sought, in description, in dialogue, in the presentation of mind content to express truth, to free it from limitations of literary and social convention and to give it the potent, authentic immediacy of the actual.

In all, a tendency has here been outlined. Perhaps that tendency has not yet culminated; perhaps it has, in the very instances offered as illustrative, gone its farthest and demonstrated its futility. At any rate it can be more satisfactorily dealt with in criticism if attempts of however fumbling and pioneering a sort be made toward exact comprehension and definition.

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INDEX

INDEX

Aaron's Rod, 68–70
Adam Bede, 98, 103
Adler, Jacob, 40–42
Adventures of Harry Richmond, The, 14
Ambassadors, The, 112, 157
Andreiev, Leonid N., 43
Anna Karênina, 26
Anne Severn and the Fieldings, 51–53, 117–18
Appearance and action, details of, in characterization (*see* Elements of characterization): in Bennett, 113; in George Eliot, 107–8; in Galsworthy, 114–17; in Hardy, 110–11; incongruity in, 121; in James, 111–13; in Lawrence, 118–19; in Meredith, 108, 110; in Dorothy Richardson, 119–21; in May Sinclair, 117–18; value of, 107
Artsibashev, Mikhail P., 43

Background, description of, in characterization (*see* Elements of characterization): general developments in, 106; in George Eliot, 102–3; in Galsworthy, 105; in Hardy, 103, 104; in Lawrence, 106; in Meredith, 103; naturalism (*q.v.*) as affecting, 102; in Dorothy Richardson, 106; symbolism in, 105; general value of, 102; in Wells, 104
Backwater, 84, 85, 120, 121, 135–36
Bain, Alexander, 35
Bateson, William, 29
Beach, James W., 61
Bennett, Arnold, 5, 100, 113, 144–46
Bergson, Henri, 31, 35
Beurer, Joseph, 36
Black, William, 19
Body and Mind, 10
Bourget, Paul, 43
Brontë, Emily, 2
Butler, Samuel, 31, 59–60
Bulwer, Edward, Lord Lytton, 19

Characterization: definition of, 3; keener actuality in, 4 (*see* Elements of characterization); widened concept of normality in, 4, 57, 78 (*see* Late-Victorian characterization, Incongruity and Extra-realism)
Checkov, Anton, 43
Comte, Auguste, 11
Conrad, Joseph, 98, 160
Convention, revolt against (*see* Naturalism, and sex in psychoanalysis), 43–44, 62–63, 127, 143–48
Craft of Fiction, The, 156, 157–58
Criminal, The, 20

Dadaism, 28, 71, 149 (*see Ulysses*)
Dane, Clemence (Winifred Ashton) 16, 160
Dark Flower, The, 115
Darwin, Charles, 32
Daniel Deronda, 18, 20, 155
Determinism (*see* Science and Late-Victorian characterization), 33
Dialogue (*see* Elements of characterization): general developments of, 137; in George Eliot, 123–24; expressionism (*q.v.*) as

affecting, 134; in Galsworthy, 131–34; in Hardy, 126; in James, 127; in Meredith, 124–26; naturalism (*q.v.*) as affecting, 141; relation to the subjective, 123; in Dorothy Richardson, 135–37
Diana of the Crossways, 12–14, 109, 140–41, 155–56
Dickens, Charles, 1, 19
Dostoevsky, Feodor, 25, 76

Egoist, The, 7, 19, 32, 97, 109–10, 124
Eliot, George, 1, 5, 9, 12, 14–16, 17, 18, 20–21, 34, 102–3, 107–8, 110, 116, 123–24, 129–30, 138–40, 147, 154, 155
Elements of characterization (*see* Description of background in characterization, Details of appearance and action in characterization, Dialogue, and subjective material in characterization): definition of, 94–96; general developments of imageal material in, 122; non-imageal in, 99–102
Ellis, Havelock, 20
Environment (*see* Science), 23
Evan Harrington, 155
Evolution (*see* Science)
Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals, The, 32
Expressionism: definition of, 27; effect upon personalized narration (*q.v.*) 159; relation to incongruity in characterization (*q.v.*), 72–77 *passim;* in Dorothy Richardson, 73–74; in the subjective elements of later characterization, 151–53
Extra-realism, 4; definition of, 78–79; in the *Forsyte Saga*, 83; grotesquerie in, 81–82; in Thomas Hardy, 80; instanced, 8; in *The Lost Girl*, 82–83; in *Mary Olivier*, 85, 87; metaphysics in, 84–91; *The Three Sisters*, 81; in *Ulysses*, 81–82; in *Women in Love*, 89–92

Fantasia of the Unconscious, The, 64, 87–88
Felix Holt, 130
Fielding, Henry, 154
First and Last Things, 31
Flaubert, Gustave, 77
Forsyte Saga, The, 83, 97, 105, 114–15, 131–34, 146–47
Freud, Sigmund, 36–43 *passim*

Galsworthy, John, 4, 5, 83, 97, 105, 114–17, 131–34, 146–47
George, W. L., 43
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang, 3, 31
Goncourt, Edmond de and Jules de, 24
Gorki, Maxim, 43

Haeckel, Ernst, 33
Hardy, Thomas, 4, 5, 59, 60–61, 67, 80, 103–4, 110, 126, 141–43
Haunted and the Haunters, The, 19
Hauptman, Gerhart, 25
Henry Esmond, 156
Heredity, 22 (*see* Science)
Hilda Lessways, 113, 144, 145
Honey Comb, 74, 75, 149, 152
Huysman, Joris Karl, 43

Ibsen, Henrik, 125.
Impressionism, 23, 24

Incongruity in characterization: in *Aaron's Rod*, 68–70; approached in *The Way of All Flesh*, 59–60; definition of, 58; due to expressionism (*q.v.*), 73–74; in *The Lost Girl*, 65–67; in *Mary Olivier*, 62; in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 60, 61; in personal description, 121; in *Pilgrimage*, 84–85; in *The Romantic*, 63; general significance of, 4; in

Sons and Lovers, 64–65; stages leading to, 8; in *The Three Sisters*, 62; the unconscious as productive of, 63–70, 82, 91–92 (*see* Psychoanalysis)
Intentions, 11

James, Henry, 3, 5, 94, 111–12, 127, 143, 156–58
James, William, 35, 36
Janet, Pierre, 36
Joyce, James, 5, 28, 70–73, 81–82, 148–49, 159–60
Judge, The, 3, 54–55
Jung, Carl, 42

Kempf, E. J., 42

Lamarck, Jean Baptiste, 31
Late-Victorian characterization: distrust of actuality in, 12; degree of complexity in, 8–9, 11–16; contrasted with recent complex portrayals, 16–17; absence of extra-realism (*q.v.*) in, 17–19; concept of normality in, 20–21; effect of contemporary science upon, 10–11, 20
Lawrence, D. H., 5, 6, 7, 8, 32, 34, 53–54, 63–70, 82–83, 87–92, 106, 118–19, 150
Leconte de Lisle, Charles M., 24
Legend, 160
Lewes, George H., 34
Life and Death of Harriet Frean, The, 49–50
Lodge, Sir Oliver, 32
Lord Jim, 98
Lost Girl, The, 7, 32, 65–67, 82–83, 106, 156, 157–58
Lubbock, Percy, 156

Maeterlink, Maurice, 25
Man of Property, The, 116
Mary Olivier, 33, 46–49, 62–63, 86–87
Master of Ballantrae, The, 156
Mayor of Casterbridge, The, 60–61, 110
Maugham, William S., 100
Maudsley, Henry, 10, 20, 30, 33
Mendel, Gregor J., 29, 30
Meredith, George, 5, 7, 9, 12–14, 17, 18, 20–21, 32, 35, 97, 102, 103, 108–9, 124–26, 139, 140–41, 147, 154, 155–56
Middlemarch, 108, 124, 140, 155
Mill, John Stuart, 35
Mill on the Floss, The, 14–15, 103, 124
Modern Lover, A, 5
Moore, George, 5, 67, 143
Mr. Britling Sees It Through, 128, 147, 148
Murry, John M., 28
Mutation theory, the (*see* Science)

Narrative, personalized: anticipated by author's block comment, 154; attempts toward, 154; expressionism (*q.v.*) in, 159; by Henry James, 157–58; by James Joyce, 159; by Meredith, 155–56; by Dorothy Richardson, 158–59; by Stevenson, 156; tendencies in narrative leading toward, 153–54
Naturalism, 23, 25, 43, 67, 102, 127, 141, 142, 143
New Machiavelli, The, 129
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 32, 43

Of Human Bondage, 100
Old Wives' Tale, The, 101, 113, 145

Pendennis, 12
Philosophy, the later, 31–32, 43, 134
Pilgrimage, 73, 84–85, 149, 158–59
Partial Portraits, 3
Pointed Roofs, 75, 76, 85, 121, 149, 151

Principles of Psychology, The, 35
Psychoanalysis (*see* Incongruity and Extra-realism): in *Aaron's Rod*, 69–70 *passim;* in *Anne Severn and The Fieldings*, 51–53; the censor, 38–39; the complex, 39–41; dreams, 39; in *Harriet Frean*, 49–50; in *The Judge*, 54–55; in *The Lost Girl*, 66; in *Mary Olivier*, 46–49; general outline of, 36–43; methods of practice, 39; in *The Return of the Soldier*, 56–57; in *The Romantic*, 49; sex in, 41–42; in *Sons and Lovers*, 53–54; sublimation, 38; in *The Three Sisters*, 44–46; assertions of the unconscious, 37–40; the material of the unconscious, 37; in *Women in Love*, 89–92 *passim*
Psychology: relation to late-Victorian fiction, 35; relation to recent fiction, 35–36

Reade, Charles, 9
Realism: definition of, 2; larger developments in, 4; widened concept of normality in the later, 57, 64, 78; the probable in, 19; infusion of romance in, 19; Russian, 25–26, 143
Regiment of Women, The, 16
Research Magnificent, The, 155
Return of the Native, The, 103, 111, 126
Return of the Soldier, The, 55–57
Ribot, Théodule A., 33, 36
Richardson, Dorothy, 5, 34, 70, 73–77, 84–85, 106, 119–21, 135–37, 151–53, 149–50, 158–59
Roman Expérimental, Le, 22
Romantic, The, 49, 63
Romola, 10, 15–16, 103

Science (*see* Psychology and Philosophy): effect upon late-Victorian characterization (*q.v.*), 10–11, 20; effect upon the later realism, 33–34; later developments in the evolutionary theory, 29–31; in *Mary Olivier*, 33; the mutation theory, 29–30
Schopenhauer, Arthur, 29, 43
Shaw, George Bernard, 31, 32
Sensation novelists, the, 9, 19
Sinclair, May, 5, 33, 44–53, 61–63, 81, 86–87, 106, 117–18
Sons and Lovers, 6, 53–54, 64–65, 150
Species and Varieties, 32
Spencer, Herbert, 35
Stevenson, Robert Louis, 19, 33, 35, 156
Strindberg, August, 43
Subjective material in characterization: in Bennett, 144–46; general developments in, 138, 153; in George Eliot, 139–40; effect of expressionism (*q.v.*) upon, 151–53; in Galsworthy, 146–47; in Hardy, 141–42; in Henry James, 143; in James Joyce, 148–49; in Meredith, 139, 140–41; in personalized narrative (*q.v.*), 153–54; relation to the non-imageal, 138; in Dorothy Richardson, 149–50, 151–53; the trivial in, 141–42, 144–45; varieties of, 137; value of, 138; in H. G. Wells, 145–46, 147–48
Swinburne, Algernon C., 43
Swinnerton, Frank, 100
Symbolism, 24–25, 105, 115, 143, 144
Symbolist Movement in Literature, The, 24
Symons, Arthur, 24

Tale of Two Cities, The, 19
Tess of the D'Urbervilles, 103, 111, 142
Thackeray, William Makepeace, 1, 11, 12, 100, 154
Tolstoy, Lyoff N., 5–27
Tono-Bungay, 128

Tunnel, The, 120
Tragic Comedians, The, 20
Trollope, Anthony, 154
Three Sisters, The, 44–46, 62, 81, 106, 118

Ulysses, 28, 73, 81–82, 149, 159–60

Verlaine, Paul, 25
Vitalism (*see* Philosophy and Science)
Vries, Hugo de, 29, 32

Way of All Flesh, The, 59–60
Ward, James, 35
Well-Beloved, The, 80
Wings of the Dove, The, 157
Wells, H. G., 5, 31, 104, 128–31, 146, 147–48, 155
West, Rebecca (Cecily Fairfield), 54–57
Weismann, August, 29
Wilde, Oscar, 11
Women in Love, 8, 34, 89–92, 106, 119
Wuthering Heights, 2

Zola, Émile, 22–23, 24

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